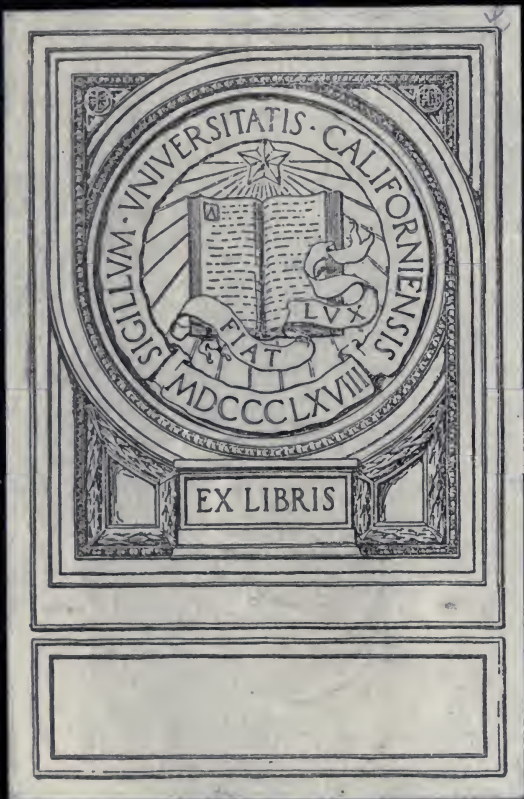


FRENCH SOLDIERS
IN
GERMAN PRISONS

CANON E. GUERS



July 1900
Francis G. ...

Francis G. ...

HOW FRENCH SOLDIERS FARED IN
GERMAN PRISONS AND HOSPITALS.



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THE
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CANON GUERS.

[*Frontispiece.*



How French Soldiers Fared in German Prisons:

BEING

THE REMINISCENCES OF A FRENCH ARMY CHAPLAIN
DURING AND AFTER THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR.

BY

CANON F. GUERS,

Army Chaplain to the French Forces.

EDITED BY

HENRY HAYWARD.

LONDON:

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THE Author is unwilling to allow the English edition of this book to appear without an expression of his heartfelt gratitude to the memory of Lord Loftus, British Ambassador at Berlin in 1870-71, for his lordship's powerful intervention and assistance, in the name of Great Britain, not only on behalf of the Author himself, but also to the great benefit of the unfortunate French prisoners of war in Germany.

The Author would feel grateful to his English readers if they would communicate to him any observations they may think proper to make in reference to the book, in order that they may be taken into account in any future editions.

CHANOINE E. GUERS.

Care of DEAN & SON,
160a, *Fleet Street*,
London, E.C.

452936

The Author has received the following note (among many others) from the Bishop of Rodez (Aveyron):—

EVÊCHÉ DE RODEZ,
July 9th, 1890.

DEAR CANON,—Thanks for the copy of your *Récits et Souvenirs de 1870-71*. It is a book which I should describe as *bleeding* with our defeats and misfortunes. It is impossible to read it without a feeling of deep depression, accompanied, however, at the same time, by a feeling of sad consolation at all the efforts made to attenuate those misfortunes and mitigate the sufferings resulting from them. . . . No one can read the book without feeling himself fortified and encouraged to sacrifice everything for duty, and to do his best for his country and compatriots.

✠ ERNEST,
Bishop of Rodez.

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HOW FRENCH SOLDIERS

FARED IN

GERMAN PRISONS.



CHAPTER I.

State of Rome and its Vicinity at the Declaration of War
—Departure for the Army of the Rhine, across Italy
and Switzerland—Strasburg Refugees in Switzerland
—Entrance into Germany.

THERE are decisive phases in the history of every century, pregnant with grave events, and marking out a new destiny for the peoples. In the history of the nineteenth century, the terrible years 1870 and 1871 unquestionably assume this epoch-making character. The most destructive wars have always followed the greatest Councils ; and thus, in 1870, on the last day

of the session of the Council of the Vatican, there resounded one of those heavy thunder-claps which are precursors of the breaking up of nations. The clouds had already been heaping themselves up, and growing thicker and thicker, on the borders of the Rhine, locking up in their bosom a terrible tempest, when suddenly the whole of Europe was frightened by the formidable voice of the cannon, shaking its provinces from the borders of the Elbe to the banks of the Seine and the Tiber.

I was at Rome on the 18th July, 1870, and at that date the Eternal City presented a little world of itself, and the *élite* of all nations were assembled within its walls. On the 19th she saw the hasty departure of these cosmopolitan strangers, and then she resumed that majestic serenity better befitting her character of capital of the Catholic world. With breathless haste the French visitors disappeared by way of Genoa and the Cornice road; Belgians and English, by way of Turin and Mont Cenis; Swiss, Austrians,

and Germans, *viâ* Venice or the Simplon. The poor missionary bishops then in Rome, however, in the impossibility of winging their way to their new distant homes, obtained shelter here and there to await and contemplate the grave events which were about to be unveiled before their eyes. The chaplains of the National Church of St. Louis were retained by their duties and the service they owed to France. And thus I remained at Rome.

On one of the last evenings of July, myself and a friend were taking our daily ramble in the direction of the favourite promenade of the Romans, and together we strolled through the broad alleys of the Pincio. On the preceding days, the liveliest animation had reigned on this lovely slope; but now all was silent, gloomy, and deserted. We wandered for a time among the tall trees; and, as the setting sun was gilding with its last rays the City of the Seven Hills, we issued from the labyrinth, crossed the esplanade, and leant over the marble balustrade surrounding

it. Rome, in all the splendour which art and nature have bestowed upon it, lay spread out before us. But, although our eyes rested upon this incomparable mass of marvels, the conversation which was taking place between us will show that our uneasy thoughts were occupied with something far different.

“War is declared, then,” one of us said. “What will be the result on the Rhine, and after that on the Tiber?”

“Oh, there is no room for a doubt that the French will be the victors. Like his uncle, Napoleon I., the Emperor will make a glorious entry into Berlin; and Italy, always as prudent as the serpent, will not stir.”

“Yes, but have you read Trochu’s alarming pamphlets, Thiers’s wise speeches, the cautious remarks of Benedetti, and, above all, the serious reports from Stoffel? All these notes are rather in discord with your patriotic opinion.”

“That is true enough; but for the last four years France has profited much by the lessons of Sadowa. She is not Austria, to

be crushed in the twinkling of an eye. Marshal Leboeuf, the Minister of War, has declared in the Chambers that there was not a single button wanting to any single gaiter of any single soldier. The Prime Minister, M. Ollivier, declared from the rostrum that he entered upon the war with a light heart; and Napoleon III. himself has just proclaimed that he would take no tent with him to the war, because there were plenty of towns in Germany in which he could find a lodging. In a fortnight at the very latest, the French will be in Munich and Berlin."

No sooner were these words uttered than a dry and strident voice, like that of a Mephistopheles, was heard close behind us. It said: "In a fortnight at the very latest, the Prussians will be in Paris!"

Believing that we were alone, indulging in a friendly chat, this interruption took us by surprise, and we turned to face our interlocutor. Saluting us with feigned courtesy, he said,—

"I see, gentlemen, that you, also, are

labouring under a delusion. You are young, although intelligent, and you are ignorant of the real condition of Germany, while exaggerating the military power of France. Do you still believe that without your permission no cannon-shot shall be fired in all Europe? Ah! a cruel deception awaits you."

"That is quite possible," I replied; "but, according to Pascal, the heart often has reasons which reason itself will not admit. And, if you are a Frenchman, you will understand that we are giving expression to our hopes, and not uttering prophecies. We should, however, be very glad to know the ground of your strange opinion on such a thrilling subject."

"I will acquaint you with it most willingly, gentlemen. I am certain that before the end of August the Prussians will be masters in Paris and the Italians in Rome. France, crushed and beaten, will cry for quarter from Germany; and the Papacy, whose proper seat is Jerusalem, will seek an asylum far distant from Rome, and will probably find

one on the pathway to the East—at Malta—under the protection of England.”

“But, sir, do you take no account of the French armies drawn up along the Rhine, and of our corps of occupation at Civita Vecchia? As long as we have in Italy a single French flag guarded by a simple corporal with his four men, the enemies of Pius IX. will not move.”

“Before the coalesced German armies your troops on the Rhine will melt away like snow; and next day your French corps at Civita Vecchia will make room for Victor Emmanuel’s regiments. That will put the cap-stone on the history of the kingdom of Italy, and will be the logical end of the political intrigues of the Emperor.”

“And may I ask, sir, upon what you base your strange predictions?”

“Gentlemen, I have just come from Germany, and I have had a very near view of the preparations for war going on there. I don’t know whether, as you said a few moments ago, France is ready; but I do

know that our King is ready ; that his Chancellor, Von Bismarck, is ready ; and that his Field Marshal, Von Moltke, is ready. I paid the latter a visit a few days ago, and found him quietly stretched upon a sofa, his face lit up with satisfaction. ‘ Marshal,’ I said, ‘ your calmness at this moment staggers me.’ ‘ Why,’ was his reply, ‘ the strategical war with France is drawn up there on those maps, and it has been settled in my own mind for a long time past. All the stages are fixed beforehand—from Strasburg to Metz, to Châlons, to Paris, and, if necessity should arise, as far as Lyons and Bordeaux.’ This, then, is the basis of my predictions. And Lebœuf’s gaiter buttons, which form the basis of yours, is only one more bit of bounce added to the already toppling load of brag borne aloft by the Grande Nation !”

“ Sir, we are French priests, and I beg you will not forget that in flinging your coarse insults at us.”

“ And I am a Protestant and a Prussian. Here is my card. Good-day !”



, WILLIAM I.

Being ministers of religion, of course a duel was out of the question, and so the incident ended ; but we returned to our homes silent and pensive, and it was only out of a kind of feverish curiosity that we looked at the name on the card. It was "Graf von Günther."

After passing along the Corso, I had to take leave of my friend, and I asked him whether he would accompany me next day to the Colonna Palace.

"Our ambassador," I said, "must be informed of what we have just heard. Besides, in presence of such events, I must not remain with folded arms an idle spectator in Rome. You know the Marquis de Banneville better than I do, and I will get you to support me in my request to be appointed military chaplain for the whole duration of the campaign."

"My friend," he answered, "your resolution is not one to be praised, but it is one to be imitated. You may count upon me."

Next day we waited upon the Marquis, from whom we got a most kind reception.

In reply to our request to be appointed chaplains he said,—

“The situation is very grave. I believe that a corps of chaplains—of which none were ready when wanted—is being formed by the Minister of War, and Cardinal Bonaparte himself has offered his services. As for you, I will convey your applications myself. I am going to Paris, and will procure a favourable reception of them.”

Soon the war-storm began to burst on the horizon. The very breezes from the Mediterranean and the winds from the Marches or the Umbria smelt of gunpowder. Every day the darkest rumours circulated in Rome. Bands of Garibaldians were assembled at Terni, ready to sweep down upon the Pontifical State, and a *corps-d'armée* was formed at Foligno, prepared for a rapid march upon Rome. Napoleon III. sought an alliance with and assistance from Victor Emmanuel, and abandoned Pius IX. to his fate. Every evening enormous crowds collected in the neighbourhood of the office of the *Osservatore*,

the only paper circulating in Rome, and every evening the outside papers spoke more plainly and more clearly than did the Roman journal. They were read out, translated, commented on; and by turns these sinister names: "Saarbrück," "Wissembourg," "Wörth," "Reichshoffen"—broke upon our ears like a rapid fusillade.

The month of August slipped slowly away with its sweltering days, and its fatal news which froze our blood. The French troops departed from Civita Vecchia to the last man, each of their embarkations coinciding strangely with one of our defeats; and the Pontifical Zouaves, and above all the Antibes Legion, the men of which were exclusively French, were burning with impatience to quit their posts and fly to the defence of their invaded country. There were desertions, or attempted evasions, from their ranks every night, and several broke their limbs or lost their lives in jumping from the fortifications into the moat in their efforts to escape.

On the evening of the 25th August I

received the following laconic despatch :
“ Are appointed Chaplain Army of Rhine.
Join at once *viâ* Châlons. Marquis de
Banneville.”

Next day I passed through the Pontifical States without stopping anywhere, and arrived at the frontier station of Orte. Here all the passengers had to alight in order to gain, on foot, another train drawn up at the extremity of a military camp. As we passed along our ears were greeted by the noise of rifle and cannon firing, and several military bands were playing the Italian national anthem. We seated ourselves silently in our new carriages, and were soon borne off to Perugia and Florence. All Italy was in a fever. On our journey we were continually passing train-loads of ammunition, provisions, and soldiers.

Arrived at Bologna on the 1st September, I found the town like a place in a state of siege ; and Modena, which was reached on the evening of the 2nd, and where I had to pass the night, looked like the quietest and

most monotonous provincial town; the streets were deserted, no business was doing, and the population was invisible. The splendid castle, the palace of the Dukes of Este, had been transformed into a military school, and inside its capacious grounds were swarms of officers in their varied and brilliant uniforms : a striking contrast with the stagnation which reigned outside.

Early in the morning of the 4th September, I heard a great uproar from the little room in the hotel near the station where I was lodged ; and, looking out, I saw hundreds of ragged men rushing towards the station like a band of convicts broke loose. Yesterday, Modena was inert and silent as a cold statue ; but now it is in a bacchanalian delirium ; the mob yelling, howling, groaning. The half-mad and half-naked crowd is shouting : “ Down with France ! ” “ Viva Prussia ! ” “ Down with the Pope ! ” “ Death to priests ! ” “ Rome for capital ! ” And some of the most frantic are waving Italian flags, around which the others are dancing like

demons. There are men, too, selling copies of a newspaper to eager buyers, and the mob is tearing them from each other's hands in their haste to read them. I can contain my curiosity no longer, so I go out into the street and purchase a copy ; and this is what I read :—

“WAR BULLETIN. LATEST BATTLES.
CAPTURE OF NAPOLEON III.

“MUNICH, *2nd September.*

“The third day of the battle ended with the rout of the French army, which is in full retreat on Mezières, pursued by the German army. The Emperor was with MacMahon, and the line of battle extended from Bazeilles to La Chapelle. It is stated that when she heard the news the Empress Eugénie fainted.”

“BERLIN. OFFICIAL. BEFORE SEDAN,
“*3rd September, 1 P.M.*

“A capitulation constituting the whole French army prisoners has been concluded with General Wimpffen, commanding in the place of MacMahon, who is wounded. Napoleon III. placed himself in my hands as prisoner for his person only, he not being in command of the troops. He leaves everything to the Regency in Paris.



GENERAL WIMPFEN.

I shall fix the place of his residence after my interview with him. What a change Divine Providence has granted us !

“WILLIAM.”

I hastened to Turin, and arrived there during the night. Here, also, the station was besieged by a crowd, who were snatching copies of telegrams from each other's hands. I had put up for a few hours at the Albergo Svizzero, opposite the magnificent station of the capital of Piedmont, and I was eager to learn the contents of these telegrams. I found them to be as follows :—

“BERLIN. OFFICIAL, 2nd September.

“To-day the enemy opened a heavy fire on all the line at Strasburg. At the same time the besieged made a sortie towards the island of Vaaken and the station. Both attacks were repulsed.”

“MUNICH, 3rd.

“The journal *La France* states that the Mayor of Châlons has published the following notice by the authority of the Prussian General commanding: ‘For every weapon found in the town after this evening a fine of ten thousand francs will be exacted.—MAJOR VON DERSEN.’

"Consequently, the Mayor of Châlons invites all possessors of weapons of war or simple fowling-pieces to bring them to the Prefecture, where the General has his quarters.

"PERRIER, *Mayor.*"

"BERLIN, 4th. OFFICIAL.

"The interview between King William and Napoleon III. has taken place in the presence of Count von Bismarck and Marshal von Moltke. The Emperor surrenders unconditionally with the whole army shut in at Sedan. He will be conducted to the castle of Wilhelmshohe, and the French army will be interned in the various fortresses of the German States."

Thus, then, with the army of Sedan taken prisoners, that of Metz surrounded, and Strasburg being strangled in a ring of blood and iron, my humble mission had become impossible. I therefore resolved to go to Geneva, and consult Monseigneur Mermillod, who was bishop there. Arriving at Chambéry early in the morning, I directed my steps to the Cathedral, and I found the officials running hither and thither, and closing all the exits and entrances. They told me

in the sacristy: "The Republic has been proclaimed in Paris. The Chambéry mob has just marched towards the Prefecture in a threatening attitude, and, fearing that sacrilege might be committed, we have closed the Cathedral."

"But you will have the goodness to show me the way out?"

"You ought to see that a priest venturing into the streets at this moment is in danger. Wait for a more favourable opportunity."

"It is impossible," I replied; "I have to take the train for Geneva."

"At your own risk and peril, then."

And so I passed out. This handsome and peaceful city of Chambéry, from the quiet slumber in which it was wrapped when I passed through it two hours before, had now woke up in revolution. A multitude of working men, women, and children, thronged the streets, with heated blood and gorged with wine, and howling "La Marseillaise." Here was one with a flag, and there was one with

a gun, and almost everybody carried a handkerchief tied to the end of a stick. In the midst of the yelling mob a something was being dragged along—of stone, or bronze, or plaster, or marble; I could not see which—and the savages were so absorbed by their glorious work that they passed quite close to me without perceiving me; and then I was stupefied at seeing that it was the busts of Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugénie that, with cords round their necks, were being dragged through the mud and mire.

On my arrival at Geneva, Bishop Mermillod received me with the greatest kindness; we had a long talk on the probable results of the war for the Church; and, although I knew not a word of German, and had fears lest I might be taken and shot for a spy, Monseigneur advised me to pass into Germany. The very next day, therefore, brought me to Lausanne, by the railway passing along the banks of the charming Lake of Geneva. At night, the proprietor of the hotel where I

was staying came to inform me that the Commissary of Police had traced me out and wished to see me.

"Show him up," I said.

"Reverend sir," observed my untimely visitor, "the delicate task is imposed upon me of asking for your papers, and of inquiring whether you intend to appear again in the town, as you have done, in the dress of a priest? This sombre costume is formally interdicted in Lausanne."

"Here are my papers, sir," I replied. "As regards my making a longer stay in your hospitable city, even if I had any such intention, the liberal communication you have just made to me would suffice to change it. To-morrow morning, I shall take the first train for Fribourg."

The policeman scanned with a suspicious eye the "Celebret" granted me by the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, and countersigned by Monseigneur Mermillod.

"I can't make anything of it," he said; "but, since you intend to depart to-morrow

morning, all I have to do is also to go away—at once.”

I had a more comfortable reception at Fribourg, and then made for Lucerne, proposing to go round by the Lake of the Four Cantons, and enter Germany by the Basle route. Although I would willingly have made a longer stay at the delightful town of Lucerne, I took a passage without delay on one of the steamers plying on the lake, intending to pay a visit to Einsiedeln *en route*.

I was seated solitary and pensive on the deck of the boat, absorbed with the lovely landscape stretched before me, and seeking no companion among the numerous travellers, when a brisk and lively priest of easy manners, and accompanied by a porter carrying his trunk, passed through the throng and made his way to the first-class saloon. He was dressed with exquisite taste; a hat ornamented with red tassels shaded his forehead, and a broad and ample cloak hung from his shoulders, and every detail of his attire

denoted that of a prelate. As he passed close to me, I rose and saluted him, and addressed him thus :—

“By your arrival, sir, Providence grants me a special favour. I shall be very happy, during the voyage, to render you the services due to you from a simple priest.”

“Don’t bother me !” exclaimed the great Church dignitary ; and without even looking at me he passed me at a bound, and disappeared down the gilded staircase leading to the most comfortable of cabins.

He certainly *might* be a bishop, I thought ; only I was wrong in thinking that all bishops were courteous and affable ; and the old saying recurred to my memory : “Dignities sometimes make one arrogant and proud, honours changing the manners of the man.”

The pleasant voyage across the lake, however, soon compensated me for this little annoyance.

In order to reach Einsiedeln, which was to be the end of that day’s journey, I had to

land at Brünnen and cross the mountains, and the moment I got ashore I hastened my steps towards the carriage-stand in order to secure a vehicle before the rush of tourists came. Scarcely had I reached it, when I felt a heavy hand upon my shoulder.

“Are you going to Einsiedeln, Monsieur l’Abbé?”

The slap on the shoulder and the question addressed to me came from the disdainful prelate who almost insulted me in the boat on the lake. But, instead of paying him back in his own coin, with a gruff “Don’t bother me,” I contented myself with simply answering,—

“Yes, sir.”

“If we take a carriage between us, it will be only half the expense for each of us,” added the prelate.

With a mere affirmative nod I concluded the bargain, and, boldly jumping into a coach, I settled myself in one corner without delay. Once inside, my companion’s loquacity

appeared to have ceased, and, remembering the cool reception I met with on board the steamer, I resolved to let him have the first word. But the illustrious dignitary of the Church, instead of now making amends for his previous objectionable treatment of me, took up a more discouraging attitude than ever. Sinking into the soft cushions of the vehicle, folding his arms under his cloak, pulling his hat over his forehead, and then closing his eyes, he seemed to completely bury himself within himself. And thus we sped through the smiling plain, bordered with green meadows and wooded hills, from Brünnen to Schwyz, and then, turning to the left, we took the steep road leading up to Einsiedeln. Cottages and trees became rarer as we ascended, and presently only a few solitary pines were met with, balancing their broad branches loaded with snow, and towering over the edge of some precipice or glacier. The scene below, however, became more and more radiant; but my companion was totally insensible to the delicious and

ravishing spectacle, and not the shadow of an emotion passed over his half-hidden face. Having nothing further to hope for from this dumb companion, I took out my Breviary, and the interesting prelate did likewise, and then it was easy to observe and study him closely. Glancing furtively over my shoulder, I perceived that he was reading his Breviary as Rossini played Wagner's music ; *i.e.*, upside down !

At that moment, however, we drew up at a chalet situated on the crest of the mountain, and soon we were seated at table ; butter, cream, milk, honey, fresh trout, and cakes being set before us. A rustic bowl of frothy milk seemed to me more savoury than all the nectar and ambrosia of the gods. But the prelate, who sat at my side, called for some absinthe, then for a glass of brandy. These were tossed off without a sign of blinking ; then he rose and returned to the carriage.

I felt more than ever perplexed, and I followed him, resolved at whatever cost to

solve the mystery of this impenetrable sphinx.

"Shall we get to our journey's end before night?" I said.

"I don't know," was the laconic reply.

"Monseigneur, pardon me an indiscretion. Judging from your exterior, you must, like me, have come from Rome?"

"The cowl doesn't make the friar, Monsieur l'Abbé; you know that very well."

"Precisely so," I answered; "but the friar wears a friar's clothes, and yours appear to me to be those of a real Roman bishop. Am I wrong?"

"Yes and no! I am not a Roman, but I have lived in Rome long enough to take orders and get a prelacy."

"You must, then, have followed the course of lectures in Rome?"

"No, I studied alone, and lived in a cottage outside of the city."

"But to be ordained you have passed your examinations?"

“ Yes, like everybody else—at the Roman College.”

This dialogue, in which our prelate believed he had maintained all his reserve, was short, but very conclusive. Knowing, as I did, that the presence of all the students at the lectures is rigorously exacted, and that the examinations in divinity are gone through exclusively at the Cardinal Vicar’s residence, I was sufficiently edified. The self-styled Roman prelate was a rank impostor.

A silence as of the grave followed this conversation.

All this time we were descending a declivity by a road on the margin of a forest, and the silvery rays of the moon were already lighting up the darkness in the distance. Our coachman, who had been blithely singing all the way down, now suddenly turned towards us, and, pointing with his whip to a line of feeble lights dotting the horizon, he joyfully exclaimed, “ *Einsiedeln!* ” and shortly afterwards we alighted at the Hôtel du Nord, on the grand square of the devout city.

Refusing to seat himself at the *table-d'hôte*, my companion started off at once to the post-office, and returned when the meal was half over, growling and blustering and swearing. He said he had received important letters which called for his immediate departure. He asked that a vehicle should be brought instantly, and when it was found impossible to get one he gave strict orders to have one ready very early in the morning. At the first dawn of the following day he quitted Einsiedeln, without having even visited the Holy Basilica.

A few days afterwards I read the following paragraph in a Geneva paper: "The citizen Ferré was seen a few days ago, passing through Lucerne, Zurich, and Basle, disguised as a Romish priest. He expressed his intention of reaching Paris, to take the direction of serious revolutionary movements which are on the point of breaking out in France."

I had performed my pilgrimage in the company of this notorious General of the

Commune, the executioner of our hostages of La Roquette, disguised as a Romish priest. Later on he was more ignominiously disguised as a woman in the midst of the horrors of the barricades, the firing of Paris, the fratricidal conflicts, the sanguinary massacre of heroic martyrs, all coolly concocted and arranged by his fierce and pitiless revolutionary rage.

My stay at Einsiedeln was very short, as I was anxious to get beyond the German frontier. I visited some friends at the village of Zug, and procured an outfit suitable for the rough wintry season I was about to pass in Prussia. I was here advised, before crossing into Germany, to write to Carlsruhe, Ulm, Munich, and other dépôts, which the newspapers of Zug represented to be full of prisoners, so as to get a letter of invitation from some German authority, which would serve as a passport in case any suspicious local official should order my arrest. I wrote these letters accordingly, and addressed them to the managers of the military hospitals.

One evening the "Seefeld" châlet, a modest hotel adjoining the hospital, was unexpectedly filled with travellers. The day previous it was quiet and empty, but now it was overcrowded like an eastern caravanseraï. The strangers arrived worn out, broken down, and exhausted, dragging behind them the long and heavy chain of their family and national misfortunes. They were fugitives from Strasburg, whom the conqueror had allowed to pass out amid a hail of iron and flame, to save the miserable remains of their existence.

They brought rage and despair in their souls, and with grief in their voices they told of the horrors and heroisms of the siege, the condition of their city reduced to ashes, the breaches in the ramparts, the arrogance of the conquerors, the anguish of the conquered. Their narratives were broken by tears and lamentations. In one of the groups I observed a tall old man, of an austere and energetic mien, who seemed to be looking about for solitude and silence. I guessed

there was some more than ordinary poignant grief in that man's mind, and I went up and expressed my sympathy with him. At first he was painfully affected.

"I see you are a Catholic priest," he said ; "I am a Protestant, and a minister of the Gospel. My name is Lafitte, and I am president of the Strasburg Consistory. Ruined physically, almost blind, without strength, and at the end of my resources, separated from all my friends who are agonising in our Strasburg surrounded by a circle of iron, I decided to take advantage of an exit offered to a few privileged ones. And here I am, stripped of everything, an exile, and not even knowing whence I shall get my to-morrow's bread. Oh, Bismarck ! Oh, William ! What scourges and vampires they are, for France, for Alsace, for myself ! Ah, Monsieur l'Abbé, our Master bids us forgive, but I have no longer the moral energy nor the Christian faith to obey Him. Are we Strasburgers to forgive the Prussians ? Never ! Between us and

them the Rhine shall pour down eternal floods of hatred, rage, and vengeance!"

"My purse and my heart are open to you, sir," I said, "and if you will permit it we will work together amid so much ruin, and endeavour to revive our drooping souls in the hope of a better future, and of living again to serve our families, our religion, and our country."

From this moment, M. Lafitte became my constant friend and companion, and he gave me some useful lessons in German. Our theological views differed of course, but no controversy could arise to alter our mutual esteem and affection. We passed the days together, and returned together in the evening to the Seefeld châlet.

One night we found a letter had arrived for me. It was sealed with a heraldic seal on black sealing-wax—a count's coronet—in a black-bordered envelope bearing the Carlsruhe postmark. It was from "Ida, Baroness von Berstett," and was dated from the great lazaretto of Carlsruhe. It informed me, in

reply to my application to the managers of the hospitals, that the writer had been desired by the Grand Duchess of Baden to acquaint me with the fact that there were enough ministers of religion in Carlsruhe to provide the necessary spiritual consolation for the French sick and wounded there.

M. Lafitte's wise counsel was of value to me now.

"Since there is nothing to be done in Baden," said he, "go into Bavaria by way of Rorschach. According to the German papers, this kingdom is overflowing with Frenchmen. It is Catholic, too, and you will be better received and treated there than anywhere."

I thought the advice was good, and set off for Rorschach, making a halt at Rapperschwyl on the way. From Rorschach the vast chain of mountains known as the Black Forest is visible, and here the borders of Switzerland, Baden, Wurtemberg, Bavaria, Austria, and Italy touch, or almost touch. At no other spot in Europe do so many

different nationalities come into juxtaposition.

At my first glance across the frontier I felt a profound oppression at the heart, and my breath came and went quickly. The vision which for so long a time I had been longing and yet dreading to contemplate, now at last dazzles my eyes. Germany is there! I can see it, but I have yet to reach it. Like Moses arrived at the threshold of his destination, ought I not to stop there? How often do our dreams melt and fade away in presence of the reality! I asked myself whether the purpose which brought me into these distant countries was reasonable and practicable. To set my doubts at rest, I resolved to ask the advice of the venerable curé of Rorschach. His answer disconcerted me.

"You cannot enter Bavaria without a passport, unless you are well known. It is required of all foreigners."

"Would you ask the mayor to give me a pass?"

“ He would probably refuse it ; but we can try. You shall have a reply to-morrow.”

I passed the day in inspecting Rorschach and the neighbourhood, and the repose of the night was broken by an extraordinary disturbance at the waterside and on the quays. In the morning my landlord informed me that firing had been heard on the lake ; that a vessel, on board of which were a number of French prisoners, had attempted to gain the Swiss shore to escape from the clutches of the Germans ; that the fugitives were pursued and recaptured, after some of them had been wounded, and all were conveyed back to prison.

As I had informed him of my intention of penetrating into Bavaria, my landlord added, “ You are very imprudent. On arriving there you will be shot, or at the very least put into confinement. You had better abandon your rash design.”

A few minutes after, the worthy pastor of Rorschach came along, and stated that the mayor had refused to grant me a pass.

“And now,” he added, “you must renounce your risky enterprise. Come, fetch your luggage from the hotel, and, after spending a few quiet days with me, you can return to France.”

This reiterated advice very much resembled that once given to Cortes when he arrived on the coast of Mexico. He, however, burned his ships to make the cowards understand that all hope of retracing their steps was gone. But in my case, so far from having any ships to burn, I was burning with eagerness to find one sailing towards the German coast.

I was wandering one evening in the cemetery surrounding the church of Rorschach, when I made the acquaintance of a Sister of Charity. While contemplating the scene around me, the soft tones of a person engaged in prayer fell upon my ear, and presently a young and modest *religieuse* approached me, and inquired, with a smile on her lips, why I was lingering there. I told her my story, and the difficulty I was in.

When she had heard all, she informed me that she was a French sister from the Convent of Alstätten, near St. Gall ; that she was on a visit for that day only to Rorschach, and added that if I would accompany her all would be right, and I should be in Germany next day.

A few minutes afterwards we entered a Swiss cottage together, modest and plain from the exterior, but resplendent as a palace within, and a stately Rorschach matron served us with milk and honey. The two women talked together for a time in low but earnest tones. I could not catch the purport of their discussion, but I understood they were taking some energetic resolution. At last the Sister of Charity revealed the mystery to me.

“To-morrow,” she said, “you will go with this lady to Lindau. She has undertaken to conduct you to a friendly convent. The only condition she lays down is, that you shall not address a word to her during the journey, and that you shall follow her like

a son travelling with his mother. If you do not observe this precaution, you will be marked out and arrested as soon as you set foot on the German shore."

"Your recommendations shall be devoutly followed, sister," I replied, "and God will recompense you both."

I passed that night in feverish and sleepless anxiety, as is generally the case with us when on the eve of taking some decisive step in our career, and at the dawn of day my benefactress took me down to the quay, purchased tickets for the boat, and then, without having uttered a word from the moment of starting, she sat down by my side on the deck in the midst of a large number of fellow-passengers.

The Germans call the great Lake of Constance the Central Sea, or the Sea of Suabia, and the inhabitants of the five European states for which it serves as frontier are well aware that its storms are sometimes as terrible as those of the ocean. Madame de Staël rightly said that it cost a greater effort to leave one's country when one has to cross

the water. The journey takes a much more serious aspect, and an abyss seems to open behind you, as if to render a return impossible.

We were soon well within view of Lindau, nestling among the green hills, and could make out the forms of the colossal statues rising up from the landing-place. There is one which took our special attention ; it was an enormous lion, standing on a granite pedestal, turning its threatening looks towards Switzerland and France.

As we landed we were surrounded by a crowd of customs-officers, coastguardsmen, and policemen, who scanned our faces eagerly ; but, silent and unmoved, I and my companion crossed the broad quays, made our way into the town, and knocked at the door of one of the handsomest residences. We were instantly ushered into a spacious waiting-room, where my guide presented me to the Lady Superior of the English Ladies of Lindau, asked me for my best blessing, kissed my hands, and discreetly slipped into

one of them a purse filled with gold and a little silver Virgin, and disappeared to regain Rorschach by the same boat which had brought us.

I never knew the names of the ladies through whose intervention I obtained a footing on Bavarian soil.

CHAPTER II.

In Bavaria—Munich and King Louis II.—Augsburg and the Camp at Lechfeld—The Fortress of Ingolstadt—Execution of Jean Hamel and of Charles Gombauld—The Prophetic Pear-tree of Germany—The Citadel of Eichstadt—Arrest, Court-martial, Expulsion.

THE religious institute of the English Ladies is situated in the very centre of Lindau, and attached to it is a high-class school which receives pupils from all parts of Germany. I was warmly welcomed by the Lady Superior, and treated with the greatest distinction. The whole community soon learned the wonderful news: "A French priest has arrived to minister to the sick and wounded!" and the nuns vied with each other in showing me all kinds of little attentions. They also promptly enlightened me as to the real state of things, and I was

informed that the number of Frenchmen at Lindau—not very large at any time—had been still further diminished by some disturbances which had arisen, and by the attempted evasion of which the sad echo reached Rorschach.

Only a few infirm men were left in the hospital, and their unfortunate companions had been sent to the northern fortresses, where they would be more strictly confined and more closely watched. A great dread of the French prevailed in all the country round from the moment war was declared, and the recollection of their invasions in times gone by had led everybody, who were able, to take precautions. The English Ladies themselves had almost concluded an agreement to hire a place across the Swiss frontier, in the intention of transplanting their flock thither, but the signature of the document was prevented by the cannon of Wissembourg.

The ladies asked me : “Is it true that your Turcos are cannibals? and that with

their tiger-like teeth they devour our wounded and dying? We are all frightened to death at the thought of it here, and we have only to threaten our school-children with the Turco to render them as docile as possible."

"You may reassure yourselves, mesdames ; and do not frighten your charming pupils," I answered. "Our Turcos never get beyond restraint excepting when they have to make a rush for the enemy's guns, or to die valiantly fighting in their ranks. These brave soldiers of French Africa are completely carried away by their enthusiasm when they hear the roar of the cannon on the field of honour. They are not vampires to suck human blood, but they are as lions in the fight and heroic brethren in the time of misfortune. Five thousand of them have offered up their lives for France during this war, and ten thousand are being deprived of their sunshine and liberty in your German prisons."

It was not, however, the time for vain conversations. I soon had to appear before the

Burgomaster, or first magistrate of the town, and on arriving at his palace I was conducted into a large room hung with full-length portraits of the Kings of Bavaria, the Bavarians being, as is well known, of the peoples of Europe the one most profoundly attached to royalty.

The magistrate was a man in the prime of life, of rather haughty bearing, but with a benevolent face. He smilingly bade me take a seat at the table covered with a green cloth, on which some tankards stood. He spoke French very well, but with a strong German accent.

"You are a Frenchman, sir?" he said, looking at my card.

"Yes, Mr. Burgomaster, I am a French priest, come to Lindau to solicit your gracious sanction to administer the consolations of religion to our poor sick soldiers. I sincerely trust you will not refuse it me."

"You shall have it willingly," he replied, as he rang a bell; "but first you will do me the honour of taking some beer."

Two of the tankards were thereupon filled with beer.

“I am much obliged to you, sir ; but pray excuse me. I am not accustomed to this beverage, and my stomach refuses it. But I shall be everlastingly grateful to you if you will grant the request which is the sole purpose of my visit.”

“Yes, yes, you shall have what you want, but on condition that you will first drink some of my beer.”

Mdlle. de Sombreuil did not hesitate to drink a glass of blood to save her father's head, and it was not such a meritorious thing for me to overcome my repugnance for this beverage ; the Burgomaster's wish was therefore realised, and it really seemed to do him a deal of good.

“There, sir,” I said, “I have now acquired the right, according to your promise, and with your written authority, to be admitted to the hospital and to exercise my charitable and purely religious duties.”

“Yes, I'll send some one with you ; but a

written authority will not be necessary. You have nothing to fear. We are no more afraid of Frenchmen here now than our king is frightened at your republic. You can be quite easy. A Catholic priest is always well received and kindly treated in Bavaria."

The rest of the morning was taken up with the visit to the Lindau lazaretto. I found that a single ward sufficed to hold the few wounded left ; they were well accommodated and cared for, and were very pleased at my visit. I returned to the convent about one o'clock, with the firm resolution to go farther north without delay, as there was evidently nothing in Lindau for me to do.

They were waiting impatiently for me, as it was meal-time, and the Lady Superior informed me that I should be joined at table by the Rev. M. Haneberg, one of the principals of the Monastery of St. Boniface, of Munich. This gentleman informed me that he was bound that evening for the Bavarian capital, and courteously offered to be my

guide thither. This rendered any hesitation impossible on my part, and accordingly we took the night train together, and by the early morning we were installed in a real palace—the Royal Abbey of the Benedictines at Munich.

During the journey my learned and affable companion—who afterwards, in 1872, was raised to the Bishopric of Spire—won my admiration and entire confidence. The moment we arrived at the Abbey he conducted me to a comfortable apartment next to his own, and pointed to a Latin inscription over the door, which ran as follows :—

“ Hic tibi per tres dies
Sint domus, mensa, quies.” *

“ These three days,” he said, “ are granted to all our guests, who visit us in rather large numbers from every corner of Europe. Change them into three months, or three years, if your ministry requires it ; or even

* “ Accept here, for three days, lodging, bed, and board.”

for a permanency, if you have the vocation for a Benedictine."

"Thanks, reverend father," I replied; "I accept with gratitude the shelter of your roof and what your table offers; but you must not reckon upon my remaining here nor upon my becoming a Benedictine."

Munich (München, "monks," in old German) is to-day one of the most interesting capitals of Europe. Situated in the centre of a vast plain of meadow-land, and a meeting-point for eight important lines of railway, it commands the whole country. Its *entrepôts* of cereals, its breweries, its metallurgic industry, and its artistic curiosities, make of it a city of the first rank. Its former kings, too,—Louis I. and Maximilian II.,—endowed it with splendid buildings, magnificent streets, and rich museums. The royal palace is reckoned to be one of the greatest and most commodious in Europe. The Elector Maximilian sank such immense sums in its construction, that no one in Germany could ever imagine whence he drew so much

wealth. He was a most extravagant prince ; and when he was informed of the surprise which his work had caused, he is said to have replied : “ If I were to live ten years longer, I should pull it all down and build another far more superb than this.”

The occupant of this magnificent abode when I arrived in Munich was the eccentric King Louis II., the most capricious and unfathomable monarch that ever wore a crown. M. Goubier and M. Tissot have drawn admirable portraits of him, and these I will endeavour to analyse, aided by my own recollections.

So far as his personal appearance went, Louis II. was without contradiction the most handsome young man in all Germany. He was tall and slender, with large melancholy black eyes and a kindly countenance framed in an abundant growth of jet black hair ; he was a brilliant horseman, and an artist from the depth of his soul ; his caprice reached the limits of monomania, and his originality bordered on madness. From the high ter-



KING LOUIS II, OF BAVARIA.

aces of his Munich palace can be seen the hanging gardens which he had planted, in imitation of Semiramis, with an artificial lake, wooded slopes, green meadows, and even a sky made by the hand of man and spangled with false stars and constellations.

At the bottom of this garden a forest opened out, peopled with parrots taught to salute His Majesty by name whenever he appeared among them. Beyond that, stood up a chain of mountains built with cement—a miniature reproduction of the Himalayas, the highest and most picturesque mountain range on the face of the globe. The strange monarch went often there alone in search of absolute quietude, and spent hours there, lazily stretched out among the grass and flowers. At other times, seated in his “Kiosque of delights,” which he never entered except in Turkish costume, he would light up his huge long pipe, recline on a sumptuous divan, and, resting there gloomy and motionless, he would call for a tempest.

On the instant, machinery was set at work, and the lake was hidden in storm-clouds, the lightning flashed, the thunder rolled, the earth trembled, and suddenly the whole scene was shaken by a report like that of a tremendous earthquake. It is narrated that an actress, once invited there by Louis II., to sing the famous "Roi de Thulé," was so terrified by this improvised tempest that she rushed into the water and almost perished before the calm eyes of His Majesty.

At night this monarch could only sleep by a bright moonlight. If Phœbus herself would not deign to smile upon him through the vast window-panes of his apartment, recourse was had to the electric light. By the most ingenious arrangements perforations had been made in the ceilings, and tiny specks of light would shine like stars through a thousand holes, and an electric moon shed forth her pale rays.

After one of the latest eruptions of Vesuvius, the King wished to have a life-like representation of the great phenomenon on

his own premises to contemplate at his ease, and professors of geology at the University of Munich were charged to manufacture a volcano on the hill of the royal castle of Hohenschwangen. The success was so complete that the peasants from all the country round hastened towards the castle, believing it to be in flames.

It was especially in his royal domains that Louis II., eager to imitate the extravagance of his great ideal, Louis XIV., at Versailles, gave the rein to his grandiose eccentricities. That of Berg, which was his favourite residence, is built in the centre of an island planted with fragrant roses, and the Lake of Starnberg surrounds it like a wide azure scarf. Here specimens of every known variety of the queen of flowers displayed their perfumed splendour in a voluptuous garden peopled with nightingales and other warbling birds. From the royal windows, the eye falls upon an immense grove emerging from the lake as from a crystal goblet, and from the bosom of this grove rises a

graceful Swiss châlet, where, on summer evenings, Louis played for hours together the masterpieces of Wagner. Further on a Moorish pavilion raises its head ; and in this building, like the hero of the poet of Bagdad, he frequently passed whole nights surrounded with lamps of alabaster and pans of smoking incense.

Often, during the fine summer nights, the inhabitants of the villas dotted along the margin of the lake heard sounds of exquisite music which appeared to come up from the water, and if they looked out they saw a gilded barge skimming over it. Suddenly a solemn silence would succeed to the enchanting strains of music, the gondola stops, and the King plunges with ecstasy into the sparkling waters of the lake.

When he took up his abode at his castle of Hohenschwangen, where all the servants had to be trained musicians and singers, the King gave a monster concert every midnight. These executants were numbered by the hundred, and they performed at the foot of

the great tower, while the King wandered about, gloomy and melancholy, among the battlements.

The famous German composer, Wagner, for a long time cast something like a glamour over the King's mind. His Majesty called him his friend, his brother, his master, and heaped upon him favours and a profusion of costly gifts, jewels, diamonds, and estates. He had him to reside in his palace, and then, not content with seeing him at all hours of the day, His Majesty would sit down at night and write him incoherent letters on German unity, modern progress, and the boorishness of his beloved Bavarian people. At last Wagner, by his arrogance, his greed, his extravagance, and his wastefulness, helped to work the ruin of Louis II., and public indignation rose to such a pitch against him, that the King, who was moved to tears by the necessity, was compelled to dismiss him from his presence, and he died at Venice in 1883.

In politics, King Louis II. was as whim-

sical as in music. All the traditions of his country, as well as all his family ties, connected him closely with the house and the interests of Austria. In 1866, his soldiers fired upon the Prussians at Sadowa. In 1870, the Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia was generalissimo of his Bavarian army! but, at Vienna, he united himself by the closest bonds with the Emperor Francis Joseph, and afterwards he went to Versailles, and in the name of all the German sovereigns proclaimed William, the aged King of Prussia, German Emperor! What did it matter to him, so long as his life, in the seclusion of his palaces and castles, was a perpetual romance of the Thousand and One Nights!

One day, efforts were made to induce him, at last, to marry an Archduchess of Austria; he escaped to Switzerland to preserve his liberty, and to have *William Tell* performed before him in the open air on the Lake of the Four Cantons.

Another day, his ministers came to seek

him to transact important affairs of State ; they found he had gone to Italy, passing through the whole of the Tyrol on horseback. He was expected at Munich at the formal opening of the Chambers ; and he was all the time in Paris, under the strictest incognito of Count de Berg. Again, for the celebration of his birthday, wishes went up from all parts of Bavaria that he would come home for the festivities ; and it was discovered at last that he had kept the anniversary at Rheims, by visiting the Cathedral of the Kings of France !

His suzerain, the Emperor William, once invited him to an interview, his presence being required in the interests of the German nation ; but he backed out of what he considered an act of vassalage. The Emperor then determined to come to him ; a day was fixed for the ceremony, and all Germany was informed that His Most Gracious Majesty had gone to Munich. The public, however, also learned, the day before the date set down for the interview, that King Louis II.

had gone off to the Hergoland to hunt the chamois.

Such was the fairy-like existence of this strangely constituted prince up to 1886, when it was brought to a close by a death still more mysterious than ever his life had been. He perished in the waters of the Lake of Starnberg, dragging in with him the physician who had been charged in a legal sense to remove the royal crown from his head. The murmurings of the German Press were: "Final dream and eternal mystery!" Public opinion and history have replied: "Crime inspired, if not enjoined, by Berlin!"

Madness appears to be hereditary in the royal house of Bavaria, and one cannot help pitying the people who has confided its destinies to it. King Louis I. was an artist who filled his capital with masterpieces purchased or specially executed at enormous expense; but he lived a most adventurous life. Every day at Munich he rose at an early hour, and went down to the public

market dressed in a grey frock-coat and a high hat of the same colour. Here he felt and examined the articles of food offered for sale, tasted the fruits, chaffed the fish-women, and plagued their customers. The latter called him "the fun of the streets." During the winters that he passed away from home, he acquired a European reputation for extravagance; the winter of 1842, which he spent in Rome, was a famous one in this respect. In 1848, after committing indescribable follies with the celebrated dancer Lola Montes, whom he had created Countess of Landsfeld, he slapped the face of his queen Maria Theresa in presence of the whole Court. This burning affront caused a popular revolution, and in the end Louis I. was forced to sign his abdication in favour of his son Maximilian I.

After this digression, I will return to my own story.

There was a Central Committee of the Red Cross Society sitting in Munich, and its ramifications extended throughout the

whole kingdom. Dr. Harless, president of the Upper Consistory, member of the Upper Chamber, and chaplain to the Queen, was at the head of this committee. He got his nomination from Berlin, and his professional proselytism was avowed, so that I could not count upon his kind assistance. Besides, the operations of this committee were carried on exclusively in favour of Germans, and applications on behalf of Frenchmen met with scant courtesy.

However, I lost no time in calling upon the president. I was not even honoured with an interview; but, as if I had been a vulgar mendicant, Dr. Harless instructed his servant to ask me what I wanted, and then in reply the lacquey brought this gracious information :—

“There are no French prisoners in Munich, but only sick and wounded. These are at the great lazaretto; go there.”

The great lazaretto was a vast and magnificent edifice, situated in a spacious square at the extremity of the town. I was ad-

mitted without difficulty. The wards were choked with sick, wounded, and amputated, without distinction of nationality, but devoutly cared for by Sisters of Charity. There were three priests also, one of them a young professor at the University possessing a perfect knowledge of French, and these were administering the consolations of religion to the patients. I saw them bending at the bedsides of my compatriots, and was soon convinced that they were equal to the task.

They advised me to go to Ingolstadt, where was an enormous camp of Frenchmen, they said, entirely deprived of religious ministrations; or I might go to Augsburg. One of these gentlemen had paid a visit to this last-named dépôt. "Fifteen thousand men," he said, "are huddled together there in damp sheds on the banks of the Lech. Numbers of them are dying every day. Snow and ice, too, have already made their appearance in the country—an unheard-of phenomenon; and many of the prisoners,

without clothing or blankets, have contracted frightful diseases, and several of them have frost-bitten feet."

And, in point of fact, the Lechfeld camp at Augsburg was one of the places of internment where our soldiers had the most to suffer : in a large cemetery surrounded with trees a little distance out of the town repose the remains of four hundred of them. The Prussian commander behaved kindly to the men, however, talking to them like a father at times, which he preferred, he said, to threatening and punishing. His own son was a prisoner in France ; and as the young man wrote to him that he was being kindly treated, he considered it incumbent upon him to alleviate as far as he could the sad lot of the French prisoners under his care.

I returned sadly to St. Boniface at about midday. The streets and all the promenades were crowded with men in uniform, and the sound of cannon could be heard in the distance, making the city tremble. I hastened my steps in crossing the great square where

stands the royal palace, and here a heart-rending spectacle met my view.

The square was filled with cannon covered with laurels and flowers, crowns and wreaths. Here were guns bearing on their central escutcheon, with the fleur-de-lis, the names of Louis XIV., Louis XV., Louis XVI. Yonder were Russian cannon bearing the inscriptions "Alma," "Sebastopol," "Inkerman." And further on were Austrian pieces bearing these words: "Wien," "Triest," "Verona," "Milano." They are the first trophies of our defeats; the *spolia opima* of Wissembourg, Wörth, Reichshoffen; the triumphal captures effected in our fortresses occupied by the enemy.

At this moment a terrible clatter of horses and wheels resounded in the cross streets. It is the first arrival of guns direct from Sedan. There were so many of them, that it was found impossible to place them in storehouses, so they had to be distributed among the various towns in Germany, and stationed in the squares and streets. A

numerous crowd followed this *cortège*, singing songs of victory, and flinging fresh crowns and wreaths. I turned away with tears in my eyes, and regained my lodging.

Next day I travelled north by rail to Ingolstadt. It is the strongest fortified place in Bavaria, securely entrenched behind a belt of ramparts surrounded by a treble system of deep moats fed by the Danube, and defended by the most powerful permanent fortifications.

The station is some distance from the town, and I walked in quite alone, passing on the road several battalions of troops at drill. The privates all wore the national helmet, but most of the officers had the Prussian spiked helmet, which was soon to be the universal head-dress. Many of the men, I noticed, were young and heavy-looking beardless blondes, with knapsack, gun, and spectacles; they wore the uniform, but they did not look like soldiers.

I entered the town by a broad gateway and a drawbridge, and struck into the main

street which runs right through it. It appeared to be a day's march of itself, and was full of people, and lost in the crowd I easily reached the parsonage, guided by an obliging Zouave, the first Frenchman I met with on the way. I met with an affectionate fraternal greeting from the venerable vicar, as well as from his zealous curate, Herr Ziegler, and a Swiss monk, Père Marty. These gentlemen concluded that I had better write to the Bishop of Eichstadt, who was bishop of the diocese, and then, while awaiting a reply from him, apply to the military authorities of Ingolstadt for their authority to officiate at funerals, of which two had been ordered for eleven o'clock on that very day.

Having received the requisite authorisation, I repaired at once to the lazaretto, and found that, in the little chapel attached to it, all was in readiness for the service. A picket of fifteen Bavarians were the first to arrive, with their measured tread, and as they brought the butt-ends of their rifles to the

ground the floor resounded as from the single stroke of a heavy hammer. Next came a long string of prisoners, without arms of course, and with sad and dejected countenances. They brought with them the coffins of their two deceased compatriots, and presently bore them farther to the common grave where the remains of so many brave men were deposited, cut off in their prime by hardships and disease. After the liturgical prayers and a benediction pronounced by myself, the Bavarian soldiers surrounded the grave at the word of command and fired a salvo over it. It was a touching scene, and I was myself so much affected by it that I could not refrain from addressing a few appropriate words to the poor fellows around me. They were listened to with the most respectful attention : the Bavarian soldiers erect, cold, and silent ; the French prisoners all on their knees.

I devoted the evening to visiting the sick and wounded, of which there were a great number in Ingolstadt, and before I returned

to my lodging I went to see the prisoners' camp. The dépôt was situated on the bank of the Danube and in the citadel, of which the interior courtyards, casemates, and towers formed the prison.

Some of the men were quartered in wooden huts, and had to sleep almost in the open air. The first cold weather that came made many victims here. There were seventy of these huts, and in every one were at least fifty Frenchmen. Every time it rained the water came through the make-shift roof, and fell upon the straw which served as bed, and soaked the poor fellows' clothes. They were, in fact, condemned to death. Others were quartered in the passages and lobbies and low-pitched casemates. These were even still more to be pitied; for when they were shut in at night the heat was like that of a furnace, the air was foetid, and the smell sickening, and breathing was as difficult as in the nethermost hold of a foul vessel.

In the daytime all these men had to labour in a vast plain bordering the fortifications

of Ingolstadt, where defensive works were being constructed. There they were in their thousands, watched by sentinels with loaded rifles, wielding picks and shovels and trundling wheel-barrows. The sight of them brought to one's mind the Hebrews and their Egyptian taskmasters. How much better would all these young and vigorous arms have been employed under the walls of Metz or Paris! A captain of Zouaves, whom I met, solitary and taciturn, on this gigantic execution-ground, said to me, with fury in his soul and vexation on his features, "If we had had the slightest suspicion of all the torments of this captivity, we would have preferred a thousand times to die fighting at Wissembourg!"

While we were conversing we had unconsciously reached the limits of the camp. A cordon of infantry soldiers were placed as sentries here, pacing over the ground allotted to each, and we were brought to a standstill. The nearest man called out,—

"Wer da? Qui vive?"

We were so taken by surprise that we stood motionless and mute. The sentinel then brought his rifle to the "present," and took up a threatening attitude.

"Let us go back," said my companion ; "if we take another step forward he will fire upon us."

A sentinel at his post is a man not to be trifled with ; so we retraced our steps and returned to the town.

We found the main street obstructed by a noisy crowd, in the midst of which a desperate fight was going on, but we could not follow the details of it, nor distinguish those engaged in it. We could only see the glitter of naked sabres and men falling to the ground with their arms thrown up in the air ; and all we could hear were fierce and brutal shouts. Streams of people, with angry looks and threatening cries, were rushing from all the side streets to join the mob.

We soon learnt the cause of the disturbance. Jean Pierre Auguste Hamel, a young soldier of the 8th Battalion of Chasseurs,

born at Vouville, near Beaumont (Manche), was passing along quietly and thoughtlessly on his way to the dépôt. He did not notice that a Prussian officer passed him, and failed to make the accustomed military salute. The officer turned upon him furiously.

“Ah!” he exclaimed, “I will not soil my hands by touching you,” and he struck the French soldier with the flat of his sabre repeatedly.

The warm blood of the soldier rose at this treatment, and he sprang like a wounded lion upon his cowardly oppressor, struck him to the ground, and trampled upon him in the public street. He was immediately seized and taken to the lock-up. Poor unfortunate!

The brutal treatment which German officers mete out to their own men is so well known that it is not surprising this helpless French prisoner should have met with a similar experience. The Germans, however, were much less arrogant in their manner towards those of their captives who were officers. One of these was met in the

grand square of Ingolstadt one day by a Bavarian officer, who looked him up and down with a sneer. The French officer remonstrated with him, but only received jibes and insults in return. He told the Bavarian he should insist upon an apology or a meeting next morning, and went straight to the commandant of the place, with the request that he would fix the conditions of the meeting, which was inevitable. The request was granted, and all the preparations were made, but next morning his insulter had disappeared!

It can be well imagined that the Hamel incident caused great excitement in the town. A court-martial was summoned without delay, and the young man was unanimously condemned to death for striking a superior officer. The sentence was to be carried out at daybreak next morning, in presence of all the troops and all the French prisoners. The thought occurred to me to try and save this young fellow, or at any rate to get permission to pass the night with him; and

at ten o'clock in the evening I knocked at the General's door.

"The General receives no visitors at night," I was told.

"Will you please give him my card?"

After a few moments of anxious suspense I was ushered in.

"General," I said, "I have come to Ingolstadt to tend and comfort our unfortunate prisoners, and I am bold enough to wait upon you with the object of interceding on behalf of the most miserable of all of them."

"I understand," answered the General; "but you will not succeed. Your unruly Frenchmen want a striking example, and they shall have one. Hamel will be executed at daybreak. The sentences of our courts-martial are never remitted."

"I implore mercy for him, in the name of your mother and of his. Hamel was provoked, and does not deserve death."

"I cannot pardon him. The King only can do that."

“Well, then, I will go to-morrow morning to Munich, and will have his pardon by the evening.”

“The King is not at Munich, and the sentence will be carried out before you get there.”

“It is death, then, inevitably?”

“Yes.”

However, I obtained his permission to visit the condemned man, and we passed the night in prayer and devout conversation. He was calm enough—he felt that he had performed a duty rather than committed a crime; while it was I, his comforter, who sobbed and wept.

In the grey morning I accompanied him to the drill-ground,—to the fatal post,—and before his eyes were bandaged he begged me to inform his comrades that he did not repent of the act for which he had to suffer, but he was sorry that during his short existence he had offended his Maker so often as he had.

The emotion, loss of rest, fatigue, and

anguish I had passed through in connection with this incident so unnerved and prostrated me, that all next day I was unable to visit the bedsides of the sick and wounded prisoners. But this was only the first trial of the kind I had to pass through. Ingolstadt was certainly one of the places where our captives in Germany were treated the worst, and there, as they had done at Bazeilles, the Bavarians proved themselves the most relentless of conquerors.

On the 9th January following, Charles Gombauld, aged twenty-two, a sergeant of the 2nd Sharpshooters, born at Dinan (Côtes-du-Nord), suffered at Ingolstadt a fate similar to that of Hamel. He was making a cigarette one day as he was standing at the door of his hut, when a German corporal passed and ordered him to "Go inside" in a language which he did not understand. The order was consequently not obeyed, and the corporal seized him by the collar. He raised his arm to defend himself, and the result was that he, too, was condemned to death. Père

Marty confessed him and prepared him for execution, and he received his death with unbandaged eyes and without flinching.

I now received my expected answer from the Bishop of Eichstadt, enjoining me to proceed to the fortress of that place, Ingolstadt being already provided with a titular chaplain, and requesting me to start off without delay. Without the least regret I quitted Ingolstadt, where I had passed through such sad experiences.

In the train I met with one of the strangest characters that it is possible to imagine. It was a fat tradesman of Nuremberg, returning from a visit to Salzburg. He was carrying home, inside his waistcoat, the twig of a pear-tree, of which he said he was prouder than Germany need be of all the laurels she had won in France.

He narrated that, from time immemorial, at Walderfeld, near Untersberg, a certain pear-tree had been treasured up which was looked upon as the palladium of the empire. When things were prosperous this tree

blossomed and bore fruit; and when they declined its leaves became blanchéd and no fruit was formed. In 1806, when Napoleon I. forced the feeble Francis II. to sacrifice his title of Emperor of Germany, and to content himself with that of Francis I. of Austria, this mysterious tree, in sympathy with the public mourning, yielded neither leaves nor fruit. In 1848, when German unity essayed to reconstitute itself at Frankfort, it blossomed forth once more, but only to languish again when this political Utopia melted away. In 1870, as if to celebrate the miraculous resurrection of the German Empire, it yielded a most abundant crop. My travelling companion had just been on a pilgrimage to Walderfeld, and in a state of great enthusiasm he recounted these patriotic stories. "This year," he concluded, "a great people will be vanquished, and a prince, whose family is deeply rooted in the hearts of the Germans, will be proclaimed Emperor. The prophetic tree has spoken!"

I left the enthusiastic tradesman to prose-

cute his journey to Nuremberg with his trophy from the pear-tree, and I alighted at nightfall at the Eichstadt station. The station is a long way out of the town, and I lost my way among the meadows and marshes, and wandered about for a long time, until I fell in with two peasants who put me in the right path; it was quite dark, therefore, before I reached the town, and when, worn out with fatigue, I knocked at the door of the episcopal palace.

The Bishop (Mgr. Léopold) was extremely kind and courteous, thanked me warmly for having responded so promptly to his invitation, and promised he would send his secretary next morning to the General commanding to obtain the necessary authorisation to enter upon my ministry among the soldier-prisoners in the citadel, and among the sick in the hospitals of the town.

Accordingly, at ten o'clock next morning, we went to headquarters, situated in an immense barracks in the centre of the city, and were received at once by the Governor.

He was in full uniform—helmet on his head, sword by his side, his breast covered with stars and orders—standing erect, stern, and icy.

“Mr. Chaplain,” he said, in excellent French, “if you were a German priest I would be very willing to authorise your ministry in this place. But you are a Frenchman, and for that reason you can neither remain here nor on any account penetrate into our citadel.”

“General,” I answered, “I only solicit your favour on behalf of our sick and dying in the lazaretto. You are too humane and too much a Christian not to take pity upon those poor fellows. If you wish it, I will enter into a formal engagement not to leave the lazaretto, and to constitute myself a prisoner.”

“I cannot give you any such permission; I can only order you to take your instant departure.”

I returned to the episcopal palace in a state of consternation at this reception and

this pitiless code of regulations, stifling, as it did, every charitable feeling.

The noble prelate, too, was profoundly indignant at my having come so far, in spite of so many obstacles, and then, having reached my destination, to be unceremoniously ordered off!

I determined, however, to return next day to Ingolstadt and Augsburg, and in the meantime to devote the evening to taking an outside view of that citadel into which I was not allowed to penetrate. It is rather an ancient fortress, with its moats and walls, its loop-holes and towers, and I walked around it absorbed in sad reflections at the thought of the numerous victims pent up within. Presently I seated myself on a little hillock opposite the principal entry to the fort, above which was a lateral tower, the battlements of which were crowded with men wearing képis, shakos, and chechias; they were the prisoners—Zouaves, rifle-men, Turcos, and lines-men. They were leaning over the ramparts gazing silently at the

horizon in the direction of their beloved France.

An irresistible impulse came over me, and I rose and waved my hat and white muffler towards them ; they soon perceived the movement, and frantically they returned the salute from the ramparts.

Then, although overcome with emotion, I silently retraced my steps in the direction of the town. I had not got far, however, when I was pursued and stopped by four armed Bavarian soldiers and an officer, and dragged inside the fort. Here the officer addressed me in a flood of language, but he was in such a violent passion, and spoke so rapidly, that I could not understand a word of what he said. He then gave several orders to his men, and I was pushed into the guard-house and locked up with a picket of soldiers.

An Alsatian interpreter came to inquire my name, age, birthplace, etc., and I learnt from him that I was accused of espionage, because I had walked round the citadel,

taken notes, sketched plans, and exchanged signals with the prisoners ; further, that I was about to be taken, under a good escort, to headquarters, and be placed at the disposition of the court-martial.

I was accordingly marched through the streets, amid the taunts of the loiterers and the passers-by, until I arrived at the same quarters where I had that very morning met with such a rough reception. I was led to a low and vaulted apartment, feebly lit by a skylight covered with an iron grating, and containing nothing but a plank, which had to serve for bed, table, and chair. The door was closed upon me, and there was no room for delusion. I was, in my turn, confined in a dungeon. Although my religion braced me up to pass through this awful night, I could not conceal from myself that my position was a very critical one, and that it was quite within the limits of possibility that to-morrow might be my last day. I will not attempt to describe the anguish I endured when I thought of my parents and friends.

I was fetched from my cell at eight o'clock next morning, and placed before the court-martial. After a lengthy report in German had been read out, the President addressed me, saying that I was accused of being a French spy, of having prowled around the citadel and sketched plans of it, of having taken notes, and of having communicated by signal with the prisoners, in order to instigate a revolt amongst them; and all that after having been warned not to approach the citadel. What had I to say in defence?

I replied that the things I was charged with were gratuitous suppositions. I had not come as a spy, I said, but as a Catholic priest, ready to devote myself to the bodily comfort and spiritual welfare of the poor captives. "I have sketched no plan of the citadel," I went on. "Who has seen such a plan? Show it me, and I will confess I am guilty. I simply took a stroll around the place, and saluted my compatriots whom I perceived in the distance."

The judges consulted for a few moments, and then the President said,—

“It is true that your plans and notes have not been found, but the Court is of opinion that you have them about you. Are you willing to be searched from head to foot, for the satisfaction of the Court?”

“I am willing, since it is necessary in order to establish my innocence.”

I was then taken back to the cell, and had to undergo the most minute and humiliating examination at the hands of three subalterns who closely scrutinised my person from my head to my toes without the slightest sign of shame. I was treated most unmercifully. Breviary, pocket-book, letters, and leather belt containing a reserve of two thousand francs in gold, all my fortune, and all my clothes, were taken from me and carried in to the judges, who scrutinised everything minutely. My cassock was the only thing returned to me, and then I was again taken before the court-martial.

On my re-entry the President pronounced

the result of their deliberations. "The Council decides," he said, "firstly, that if the accused can prove by official documents that he is really a French priest, he shall be immediately conducted by two officers to the Swiss frontier; secondly, if he cannot establish his identity, he will be treated as a spy with all the rigours of the military code."

I pointed out to the Court that I could not prove my identity unless they returned the documents taken from me. That they would find in my pocket-book letters from Cardinal Patrizi, written in the name of Pope Pius IX., as well as the summons from the Marquis de Banneville, French Ambassador in Rome, to join the camp at Châlons as chaplain.

The judges thereupon retired for a few minutes to an adjoining room, to examine the papers and draw up their definite verdict.

On their return the General ordered all my property to be restored to me, and then in a freezing tone he said,—

“ Mr. Chaplain, the Council is satisfied that you are a priest, and that you have not acted as spy. It finds, however, that you are guilty of three things : firstly, of having infringed my orders of yesterday ; secondly, of having gone within the military zone of our citadel ; and thirdly, of having attempted to communicate with the prisoners of war. For these reasons, the sentence of the Court is that you are immediately expelled from the kingdom of Bavaria, on pain of confinement in a fortified place if you dare to return.”

A few minutes later a vehicle conveyed me to the railway station, and two gendarmes accompanied me to Lindau, consigning me to the military guard of the place on our arrival at midnight.

Next morning I was placed on board a Swiss boat, and I shook from my feet the dust of inhospitable Catholic Bavaria.

CHAPTER III.

The Kingdom of Wurtemberg—Ulm and its Hospitals—
Stuttgart and its Representation of the Victory of
Sedan—The Impregnable Fortress of Hohenasperg
—Plot for a Rising of all the Captive Troops—The
Heroic Sortie from Prague.

BANISHED from one country, flee to another! was the Divine precept which, during my forced retreat from Bavaria, I resolved to follow, although to return direct to my beloved France would have been far sweeter. Driven from Bavaria, then, I must cross the neighbouring frontier of Wurtemberg.

On the 1st October I crossed Lake Constance for the third time, and timidly disembarked at Brüchorn, a small lake port of this German kingdom. I confess that I felt very uneasy and uncomfortable. If the

Bavarian authorities had pointed me out to the Wurtemberg police, I should soon be arrested, locked up, and perhaps this time be condemned without mercy. The Bavarian court-martial, composed of Catholics, considered they were acting leniently, but here I should be face to face with Protestants, and it was quite possible that a worse fate was in store for me.

I walked from the landing-place to the railway with a bold step and a steady pace and an outward appearance of calmness ; but my heart beat wildly within me, as if I had been a malefactor escaping from justice rather than a minister of Christ flying to the succour of his brethren. All went well, however, and next day I arrived safe and sound at Ulm, and made my way to the Catholic presbytery.

Ulm is situated on the left bank of the Danube, and contains about 30,000 inhabitants. It is protected by fortifications said to be the most extensive and most formidable of any German city. Its citadel, called

Wilhelmsberg, stands on an eminence, dominating the immense plain in the distance, the city, the forts, and the river; and at its foot stretches out an immense review and drill ground, which I saw every day filled with troops, and which was the scene of the famous capitulation of Ulm on the 20th October, 1805, when 30,000 Germans, commanded by the Austrian General Mack, with all their standards and munitions of war, surrendered to Napoleon's General Bernadotte.

Now, however, the citadel was filled with thousands of Frenchmen who were prisoners, and who were forced to work like convicts on the fortifications. Verily the capitulation at Sedan made the previous one at Ulm to sink into insignificance!

I was received with open arms by the venerable curé of Ulm, Herr Deschinger, and his two vicars, who had been recently liberated from military service. Their hospitals, they said, were already encumbered with sick soldiers, whose numbers were being

lessened by death every day. Thousands of Frenchmen, too, were immured in the citadel, in the dark casemates, and in the forts behind the walls, and the officiating clergyman, who was ignorant of the French language, limited his duties to the performance of the simple burial service.

The first thing to be done was to get an introduction to the commanding officer ; this Herr Deschinger undertook to procure for me, and we sallied forth together on this important errand. General Pritzwitz was the military governor's name, a brave Russian soldier and a learned strategist, but highly discontented at not being in France at the head of an invading corps. One can imagine how hard it was for me to have to ask a favour of him. He listened to the curé's request on my behalf ; then, folding his arms across his breast, he interrogated me in bad French as follows :—

“ I should first like to know whether you are not a Jesuit in disguise ? ”

“ No, General,” was my answer, “ I am

a simple French priest. Have the goodness to glance over my credentials, which I have brought with me. They will give a better answer than I can."

"That's all right ; we'll keep these documents until we have drawn up your official authorisation. But there is one thing more. Are you very anxious to wear that black surplice ? "

"Yes, General, as much as you are to wear your uniform."

"Nevertheless, before you enter upon your functions I shall require you to dress like the Curé there—frock-coat and trousers. Are you willing to do that ? "

"Since you make it a condition, I will change my costume after leaving here."

"Very well, then ; to-morrow you will receive a permit to visit where you like."

Before dismissing us, the General addressed me thus : "I am very desirous of having a chaplain among the prisoners. It is a guarantee of order and good morals. Soldiers ought not to be without a priest. Therefore,

though I neither like Frenchmen, nor their manners, nor their behaviour, and though I dislike their religion most of all, I am glad of your arrival at Ulm. Visit the hospitals every day. Arrange with the Curé for a religious service not only on the Sunday, but every day of the week. The Frenchmen shall be sent to the church by turns, at hours to be fixed by you. I can't conceive an army without religion. In France your soldiers don't go to church ; that is one of the chief causes of your ruin. In Germany, Divine service is obligatory all through the army, and your soldiers who are here must conform to our regulations."

General Dietl was the second in command at Ulm, and had the special surveillance of the forts ; we next paid him a visit, and were courteously received. Major Reichstadt, the Governor's adjutant, gave us a still more friendly reception ; his wife, too, even went so far as to bow to us, and both offered to assist me in the difficult duties I was about to undertake. They were indeed nice people,

and the only thing lacking with them was that they were not French. The Major was the real commander in Ulm, and was at the head of all the military services; his protection and favour therefore became a certain pledge of success.

Very early next morning I received a visit from the adjutant, who, with a respectful military salute, handed me the following document :—

“FORTRESS OF ULM.

“The bearer of this document, the Abbé E. Guers, chaplain of Saint Louis des Français, at Rome, is authorised to enter all the hospitals, forts, and workshops, wherever there may be French soldiers.

“By order of the General commanding,

“MAJOR REICHSTADT.”

I was soon fitted out by a neighbouring tailor with the “disguise” I was ordered to wear, and I laid aside the black surplice for the first time since I put it on at the great seminary of Issy. In the meantime, a cordial friendship grew up between myself and my hosts. They told me that the Abbé Bénard,

chaplain to the Duchess of Hamilton, had already passed a few days at Ulm in the exercise of his clerical functions. He was patronised by the Grand Duchess of Baden, daughter of the King of Prussia, and he used all his influence in favour of our captives. Unfortunately, his health broke down, and he was compelled to beat a retreat.

Since his departure, my hosts had supplied his place as best they could, and the Curé visited the sick prisoners every day and took them presents of clothing, etc. Many of our soldiers arrived invalided, and although short of clothing they were lodged at first in the parks, in stables, or under tents; some of them, even, were half naked, and the cold nights soon engendered chest diseases. At the present time, typhus and small-pox were raging among them, and the three extensive barracks, situated on high hills overlooking the town, had to be converted into hospitals, and these were already filled.

I started alone on my visit to the hospitals, dressed in the German fashion, and armed

with my permit ; they were called Kienlesberg, Schülerplätze, and Gaisenberg. The ascent was rude, as there were two steep hills to climb. There was a sentinel at every door of these lazarettos, and every time a person passed in or out he had to show the Governor's order.

I found there were two hundred wounded in the Kienlesberg, some stretched on beds of suffering, others hobbling about on crutches ; some with sound limbs were dancing about or indulging in rough play, and a confusing hubbub prevailed in the whole establishment. They all eagerly welcomed me, however, and overwhelmed me with questions about France, the progress of the war, and other matters. It was impossible to answer them all, so I promised to make longer visits in future, and hastened to the second hospital.

Here I found the rooms filled with very serious cases, dysentery and rheumatism predominating. There were veterans from the Crimea, or from Mexico, stretched on mise

nable pallets, broken down and dejected—types, now disappeared, of our old French army. They were all pleased at my visit, and those who were able to walk escorted me from room to room down to the outer door.

On entering the third hospital a sickening odour of death caught my throat, and almost stopped my breath. On one side were ranged men in the last stages of typhoid, on the other the victims of small-pox. But I will not attempt to describe the horrible spectacle which met my eyes. What words, indeed, could depict the infected atmosphere, the festering flesh, the living putrefaction?

All the hours of this evening were taken up in going from bed to bed. The poor unfortunates listened to me gladly enough, but they looked at me with suspicion. I proposed the sacraments of the Church to every one, *but not one of them accepted.* Guided by a young attendant, a good-looking Zouave of some twenty summers, I remarked to him on passing through a dark passage,—

"It is very discouraging. One would think our French soldiers had all turned Protestants. They all, without exception, refuse the rites of the Catholic Church."

The Zouave replied, "Sir, if you were a real French curé you would wear a black gown, and then all our sick would receive your ministrations. But we don't want any Prussian pastor. We have all agreed to that. No Prussian, or no religious rites!"

A terrible difficulty was here revealed to my mind into which I had been led by the formal promise exacted from me by the Prussian General. Forbidden to appear in the black surplice—impossible to succeed here without it! It was a dilemma.

At seven o'clock next morning the church proved too small to contain the numbers of French soldiers which crowded to it, accompanied to Divine service by an armed escort of enemies. At the end of the service, which included a suitable address from myself, I returned to the lazarettos, to pass the day amongst the sick and wounded. I bethought

me of a stratagem whereby to escape from the cruel dilemma in which I found myself on the previous day. I carried my black gown with me this time, and no sooner had I crossed the threshold of the hospital than the costume of the real French priest covered the civil habiliments. It was a glorious success. I was received at all the bedsides with rapture, and the convalescents stopped me in passing. After that day, the priest dressed as a German in the streets of the town became a real French curé inside the walls of the hospital, and I had the consolation of believing that my ministration was blessed in its results. Some of the men, indeed, from the large towns in France, who had never before been in close proximity to a priest, were timid and rebellious at first; but they soon came round, and in the end proved to be the most friendly and obedient of them all.

One morning, as I was about starting for the hospitals, the Baron de Chaulin was announced. He had come from Stuttgart to

see what he could do for our unfortunate soldiers. He had lived for a long time in Wurtemberg, and felt a desire to serve his country once more by devoting himself to his captive countrymen. He had brought his servant with him, laden with sugar, chocolate, lozenges, coffee, tobacco, and other luxuries.

“That is all very nice,” I said, “but these are all superfluities ; it is necessities we are most in want of, such as stockings, knitted goods, flannels. Each of these articles is worth a man’s life just now.”

Tears came to his eyes, and he put his hand in his pocket. “Here,” he said, “are two hundred florins, Mr. Chaplain ; buy some.”

The servant thereupon accompanied me to two neighbouring shops, which we nearly cleared of their contents, and that same evening Ul, a foot-soldier placed at my disposition by Major Reichstadt, carried some of the articles to the lazarettos and distributed them to those who needed them most.

On the following morning the same devoted soldier, a Frenchman, accompanied me to Wilhelmsberg, the citadel, which was the central depôt of the prisoners before they were distributed among the various forts. Ul carried two bales of the articles of clothing I had purchased on his shoulders. The road was rough and difficult, and the ascent steep, and we were quite out of breath by the time we reached the level ground serving as a terrace at the entry of the fortress. We were soon summoned to halt by the sentinels, and I produced the General's permit. A group of officers who came up examined it closely, and one of them informed me that I could only enter the fort alone, and must leave my attendant there.

We divided one of the bales, therefore, and I took one half in my arms, intending to return for the rest and carry it in piecemeal. I had to pass across a heavy drawbridge, accompanied by one of the men on guard, and we passed through several wide

courts and dark passages, some of the latter being pierced with loop-holes, whence the immense panorama of Ulm and its district presented itself to my gaze like a brilliant stereoscopic view; and on the drill-ground outside I could see cavalry charges and other manœuvres being gone through, looking in the distance like moving groups of children's tin soldiers. At last we arrived on a broad terrace open to the sky. All the other spaces through which we had passed were encumbered with cannon and their projectiles. But this one was filled, instead, with a closely-packed crowd of captives, and at the sight of me they pressed around me eagerly.

Several ragged men literally danced for joy on receiving the necessary articles to cover their semi-nakedness, and when my first armful had all been distributed I wended my way back to fetch a second supply, with which I descended into the casemates below. It was like going down into the bowels of the earth. These underground apartments

are thus described by the Père Joseph, in his book entitled *La Captivité à Ulm*:—
“ Built below the level of the soil, and without windows, these dens only received the light of day by narrow openings at long intervals, which had to be stopped up with straw when the weather was excessively cold. Then the poor prisoners were in total darkness, and diseases of the eyes were the frequent result of this, many of them indeed, on leaving the place, never seeing the light again. In dry weather, certainly, life in these horrible places might just be tolerated; but in wet weather, or when a thaw set in, they were not fit for habitation. The water oozed through the roofs and walls, and the damp penetrated the mattresses and the clothing. All these circumstances, so injurious to health, bred numerous maladies, which in too many cases ended in death, and hundreds of those who survived carried traces of their sufferings their whole life long. The German authorities at last gave their attention to this matter, and sometimes ordered

these miserable dens to be evacuated. But fresh prisoners came constantly,—they must be located somewhere,—and so the use of these unhealthy places became a sad and cruel necessity.”

The subject of the prisoners’ general conversation may well be imagined. They were ashamed of their position, but anxious to make out a good case for themselves when interrogated.

“Don’t believe that we surrendered,” they would say. “Oh, no! we were sold, delivered up, betrayed. Prussian spies went before us everywhere; and, deceived by them, our officers deceived us. At Wissembourg the bridges were broken down and the city gates thrown open before the Prussians arrived. At Forbach, again, we were surrounded and disarmed before the fight began. And at Sedan we were led into a trap, which was encircled with cannon as if by magic: even before burning a single cartridge we were ordered to lay down our arms!”

This was the key-note of all the talks among the common soldiers.

The subalterns were placed together in a separate bastion, and were treated a little better than the privates. They were not condemned to forced labour, like their men, but the slightest breach of behaviour subjected them to inexorable punishments. One of them, M. de Mainguy, had the imprudence to write to his mother in these terms: "I trust there will soon be an exchange of prisoners. I should be very glad. How I long to have some more shots at all these Germans." Next day a captain called him and all his comrades into the courtyard, and coolly read out this letter to them. He then exclaimed,—

"The man who wrote this letter, M. de Mainguy, is a scoundrel, not fit to wear his stripes, and he is going to be degraded."

The officer was immediately surrounded by Wurtembergers, who tore off his stripes, ran him into a casemate, and he had afterwards to perform the most revolting duties.

And yet, when compared with what was practised in Bavaria, these proceedings might be called indulgent!

On Saturday, the 7th October, all the journals of the town announced that there would be a Protestant service at the Cathedral next day, at which all the French soldiers of that persuasion would attend. It was done as a matter of public curiosity, and was quite a success. Several hundred Wurtemberg soldiers, armed to the teeth, escorted about thirty prisoners to the Cathedral, which was overflowing with civilians. They sang a German Lutheran hymn, and then they all left as they came,—the civilians to their firesides, the soldiers back to prison.

The modest little church of Ulm, however, was filled with soldiers at every service. The German officers who were Catholics attended every Sunday, and their demeanour on these occasions was respectful and devout. They came in full uniform, with a proud but unassuming bearing, and serene but rather stern countenances; and they seemed to have

a different idea of their duties towards God and society from that entertained by our own atheistic military sceptics and free-thinkers. The spectacle of a church partly filled with military officers in uniform is a common one enough in Germany, but unheard of in my own country.

October was now slipping away. In the early part of the month I took upon myself to send an appeal to all the great newspapers of France describing the sad condition of the French captives in German prisons. They all published it immediately. At the same time I wrote to Monseigneur Mermillod, in Switzerland, and to Monseigneur Deschamps, in Belgium, begging them to become intermediaries between the mother country and her children. The answers I received from these good men stimulated my endeavours and confirmed my hopes. The Bishop of Geneva said he was organising a little relief committee, and he would support me with all his strength and all his resources. The Archbishop of Malines, in

his letter, advised me to put myself in direct communication with the bishops in France, and later on he organised ambulances and assisted in the establishment of a committee at Brussels.

Monseigneur Delalle, Bishop of Rodez, likewise promised me his assistance; and Monseigneur de Héfélé, Bishop of Rottenburg, wrote to say that a French army chaplain, from Strasburg, was on his way, and would receive full powers when he reached Ulm. Father Joseph arrived, indeed, on October 21st, and as he possessed the advantage of age and experience, untiring zeal and a perfect knowledge of German, in which I was very deficient, he was the very man for the position, and all I had to do was modestly to retire into the background. The parochial clergy tried to induce me to settle down at Neu Ulm, on the other side of the river; but the new chaplain was quite equal to keeping an eye upon that place also; and, besides, I had been forbidden to set foot in Bavaria again.

The ministry at Ulm could not, certainly, have fallen into better hands than those of Father Joseph. During nine months this heroic pastor accomplished prodigies of charity.



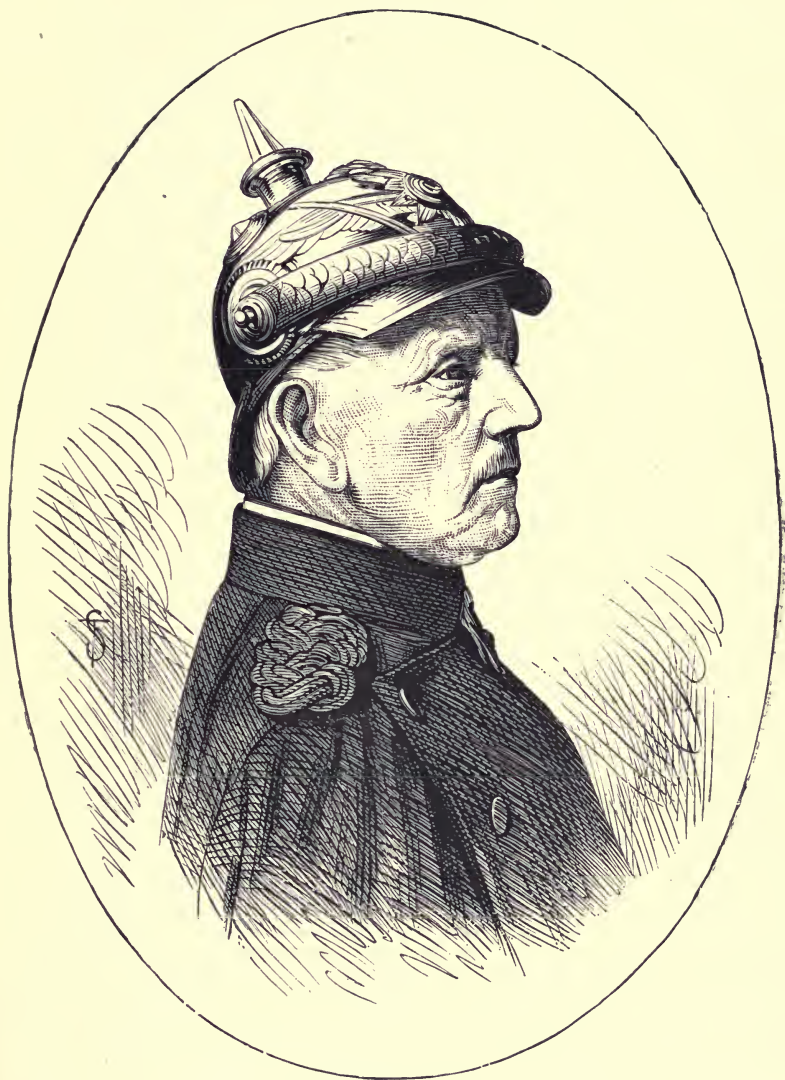
VIEW OF STREET IN STUTTGART.

On October 24th I journeyed to Stuttgart to pay my respects to the charitable Baron de Chaulin, and to ask his advice. He had established a relief committee on behalf of our captives, which had branches all over

the kingdom. The Duc d'Aumale and the Comte de Paris afforded him valuable assistance, and his benevolent deeds were the salvation of the French prisoners in Wurtemberg.

Stuttgart, at this time, was reserved as a place of internment for privileged superior officers, and at the door of each of their residences a sentinel was placed who was responsible for him. Marshal Canrobert passed a great portion of his captivity there. The private soldiers, and especially the sick, were carefully kept away from that city. But, as if in revenge for this, the proud capital gave frequent representations of the great victory of the campaign. Every day huge placards on the walls invited the inhabitants to the circus to see "The Great Victory of Sedan."

At this performance all the actors in the real tragedy were represented, their features well imitated, and in authentic costumes. There were, for instance, Napoleon III., with his pointed moustaches, Lebœuf with his long



VON MOLTKE.

whiskers, MacMahon with his wounds, King William with his look of piety, Bismarck with his effrontery, Moltke with his cold and silent courage, and others besides. The cautious creeping up of the skirmishers, the preparations for the fight, the drawing up of the men in the order of battle, the sanguinary encounter, the giving up of his sword by the Emperor Napoleon, were in turn represented in the ring, amid the delirious shouts and enthusiastic cheering of the spectators.

The set piece at the end was the battle-field of Sedan, covered with dead and wounded ; and amid a general silence a long procession of French army chaplains, sisters of mercy, and hospital friars came upon the scene, and coldly plundered the dead and wounded, finishing the latter with revolver shots if they made the slightest resistance. The journals of Stuttgart called this "popularising German history," and reviving in Teuton hearts the love and worship of their own country ! This misleading scene did

not fail, at times, to draw forth a protest from an isolated member of the audience, and there is not much to be said in favour of a government that could tolerate such scandalous and sacrilegious and lying representations.

To the north of Stuttgart, midway between Bietigheim and Backnang, is situated the town of Ludwigsburg, and here a large number of French officers were interned with General Besson. At the entrance to the town is the fortress of Hohenasperg, standing high up in the clouds and commanding the whole surrounding country. Wurtembergers say that this fortress is far more impregnable than even that of Ulm, and they are fond of calling attention to the fact that in 1805 all the efforts of the victorious French army to get possession of it were fruitless. I made several attempts at Stuttgart to gain admittance to this fortress, but they were all in vain, and the Baron de Chaulin urged me to go on further to the hospitals

in the neighbouring Grand Duchy of Baden.

My excellent and esteemed friend, the Abbé Dufor, of Toulouse, was more fortunate than I a month afterwards ; he got admission to Hohenasperg, and was able to minister to the spiritual and temporal welfare of our soldiers, by whom he was almost worshipped. But he had his severe trials. He, in his turn, had to suffer imprisonment, calumny, outrage, trial by court-martial, the tortures of solitary confinement, and hunger, with all the anguish of a possible sentence of death. And like my own career in Bavaria, his was cut short by a peremptory expulsion.

The cause of his arrest and banishment was as follows. In the month of December, Germany feared and believed for a moment that the first note of the tocsin giving the signal for the revolt of all the French captives had sounded at Hohenasperg, and that Germany was on the point of suffering

the horrors of war and a republic imported from France.

“It is well known, indeed,” says M. Dufor, in his *Impressions et Confidences*, “that at that time Bourbaki was on the frontier of the Grand Duchy of Baden, thirty miles from Wurtemberg, vainly endeavouring to penetrate into Germany, and thus to make a powerful diversion which would certainly have assured the success of our arms. Wurtemberg was already trembling with the apprehension that she might any day see a French army carrying fire and sword through her territory, and a bold stroke of this kind, aimed at the very heart of Germany, might, amid the changes and chances of the war, not only have saved France, but have changed the face of everything. Five young men confined in the fortress of Hohenasperg, guessing Bourbaki’s plan, and after having vainly waited for a sign from the illustrious Generals of the Empire, on whom the initiative fell, and who were living in plenty and comfort in the surrounding cities,

resolved to take action themselves. They organised an Insurrectionary Committee with a view to forming an army of the 25,000 men interned in Wurtemberg, to fall upon the rear of the German army opposed to Bourbaki, and thus throw open the gates of Germany to this General. The plan was received with favour by all the officers at Ulm and Ludwigsburg, and sub-committees were formed in those towns which promised to act in concert. The next step was to appoint a General to this army which was to rise, as it were, unexpectedly out of the ground. General Besson was chosen for this post, and Adjutant Merland and a student named Henri Comps undertook to have an interview with him ; a sergeant of the Garde Mobile, also, named Charles le Roger, who had been favoured with a discharge, undertook to propose to Gambetta, who was then at Bordeaux, that he should take the political direction of the movement. General Besson met these overtures with enthusiasm. ' My sword,' he said, ' is at the service of France. When we

are once masters of Wurtemberg, where there are not so many as four thousand men to oppose us, can we not cut our way out and get possession of these petty kingdoms and duchies which swarm in this beautiful country, and deliver them from the crushing yoke of Prussia ?' The 12th of January was fixed for the execution of the plot, but two hours before the time agreed upon for giving the signal a traitor sold these men for five hundred francs and his liberty. He gave up to the Governor the names of the chief conspirators and the correspondence. Merland, Comps, Richardot, Italiani, Dupont, were the ones pointed out, and he also handed over the instructions given to the sub-committee of Ludwigsburg, of which he was a member. It was Sergeant-Major du Beloy, of the old 45th regiment of the line."

All the members of this conspiracy were instantly arrested, tried, and placed in close confinement at Hohenasperg, and in several other towns of the kingdom many innocent

persons, entirely ignorant of the plot, were seized upon. The chaplain, M. Dufor, was guarded with exceptional rigour, and for a fortnight the citadel was surrounded by strong batteries of artillery. The trial of the conspirators entirely occupied the public mind while it lasted, and, on the 21st February, 1871, Merland and Comps were condemned to death, and their accomplices sentenced to military detention. It was the signature of the armistice alone which prevented these brave fellows from being shot. They were, however, kept in suspense and in confinement until the 6th April, the day of their deliverance. If these valiant but obscure soldiers had been at the head of our armies at Sedan and Metz, France more than likely would not have to surround so many pages of its contemporary history with black borders.

Their plan is said to have been grandiose but chimerical, but there is an analogous case recorded in the annals of the French nation. "In 1742," writes Colonel de Sommerville,

“the Marshal de Saxe was blockaded in Prague, in the heart of Bohemia, and two hundred leagues from France. This little army, reduced to 17,000 men by the rigours of a severe winter, was looked upon by the Court at Versailles as lost, when suddenly, in the month of January 1743, the rumour ran through Paris that ‘the army has forced the blockade, and is marching towards Bavaria.’ The word passed from mouth to mouth that M. de Belle-Isle had surpassed himself, that he was the last to leave the beleaguered city in triumph, in a coach and eight, taking with him the Countess of Bavaria and M. de Biron, a wounded General; it was also told that his army, amid the greatest privations, without food, and sleeping without shelter on the ice-covered ground, had cut its way through in spite of every obstacle. The foundation of the story proved to be true. On the night of the 16th-17th December, Marshal de Belle-Isle left Prague with a convoy of three hundred oxen, a quantity of artillery and stores, his little army formed in

five divisions. Broken down by sickness and rheumatism as he was, Louis XV.'s General—sometimes in a carriage, sometimes in a sledge—bravely resolved to lead the vanguard himself. The Austrians, not deeming it possible that troops so enfeebled could undertake a retreat in all the rigours of an especially severe winter, and through an unknown country, were taken by surprise, their lines were broken, and their scouts secured. The army covered a distance of seven leagues, or twenty-one miles, on their first march; the Marshal avoided all the routes marked on the map, and led his men through narrow and difficult defiles, where they could only march in single column, and where, to use his own expression, he had nothing but Nature to fight against. At last, on the 26th December, he arrived at Egra, having made forty leagues in ten days. He restored to France, besides thirty pieces of cannon, 11,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry, the crack regiments of our army."

What an instructive comparison is this,

between the surrenders of 1870 and the sortie from Prague in 1742; between the conduct of our leaders in 1870 and the attempt of our soldiers at Hohenasperg in 1871! The French army did not fail in its duty; it only lacked a General worthy of leading it.

CHAPTER IV.

The Grand Duchy of Baden—Dream of Napoleon III. at Constance—The Falls of the Rhine—Freiburg—The Baden Bishops—Carlsruhe and its Model Hospital—The Turcos—The Grand Duchess and the Princess Marie—Rastadt—The First Conyoy from Metz—The Bastille of Baden—The White Lady—M. du Petit-Thouars.

LEANING over the side of the great bridge of Constance, and wrapped in melancholy, a young man was contemplating the quiet and majestic flow of the Rhine. His knitted brow and vacant gaze told that he was completely absorbed in a profound reverie, while a crowd of passers-by crossed each other's paths at his very elbows without bestowing a thought upon him. Suddenly a grave-looking clergyman placed a friendly hand upon his shoulder, and said,—

“Prince, what is the subject of your sombre meditation to-day?”

“I am thinking,” the young man replied, “that one day I shall be Emperor, and that then I will give France the Rhine for its frontier.”

“It is an idle dream, Prince. The Rhine belongs to Germany, and it will remain Germany’s. And you will be Emperor when I am Bishop—that is, never.”

“My dear sir, take my word of honour for it; I will be Emperor one day, and on that same day you shall be Bishop.”

As a youth, Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte had been placed by his mother, the Queen Hortense—then living retired in the neighbouring castle of Arenenberg—under the care of the Abbé Lender, prefect (or chief inspector of studies) of the College at Constance. He was finishing his education there, and his bitter years of exile were about to be succeeded by the excitement and unrest of political life, the insurrection of the Romagna, Carbonarism in Italy, the attempts

at Boulogne, Strasburg, and Havre, the imprisonment at Ham, flight, return as deputy, the presidency of the Republic, and, lastly, the Empire!

In 1852 the Abbé Lender, then the curé of Gengenbach near Offenburg, unexpectedly received an Imperial summons inviting him to repair without delay to the Tuileries. When he reached the palace, Napoleon III., still in all the glory of his *coup d'état*, affectionately embraced his venerable old master.

"Now," he said, "let me call you Monseigneur; choose whichever of the frontier bishoprics you prefer—Metz, Strasburg, or Nancy—and it is yours."

"Thanks, Sire," answered the aged curé. "Deign to forget the dream you had at Constance, for I am not anxious to realise it."

"What? But I insist upon it. A Napoleon never breaks his word."

"Sire, I prefer my humble living at Gengenbach to all the bishoprics of France, and I esteem myself the happiest of mortals and the most fortunate of curés."

"My dear Prefect, you had my word, and, in spite of the pretence of all my ministers that it would be a scandal to see a German seated on a French episcopal throne, I would make you a bishop instantly if you desired it. But I am not, it appears, to see the fulfilment of my dream on the bridge of the Rhine? And is it more difficult to make a bishop than an emperor?"

"Sire," continued the curé, "allow me for a moment to recall an ancient incident. The Emperor Augustus planted in front of the door of his palace two laurel trees—one for war and one for peace. Up to the present moment the Napoleonic dynasty has only cultivated the laurel tree of war. Plant the tree of peace, by renouncing, as I have done, the Constance dream. Be careful not to let war loose on the borders of the Rhine against our Germany, and the future is yours."

The modest curé went back to his living at Gengenbach, never to leave it, and the Emperor profited by his old master's good



NAPOLEON III.

advice by announcing at Bordeaux, shortly afterwards, that famous motto of his reign : "L'Empire, c'est la paix," but he coolly pursued his dream up to Sedan.

The little town of Constance, situated on the borders of Switzerland and France, is the gate not only of the Grand Duchy of Baden, but of the German Empire. The scenery all around is magnificent, and the rumbling of the cataracts situated at two hours' walking distance out of the town is heard continually. From Dachstein, a railway station not far from Constance, a good sight is obtained of the famous Falls of the Rhine, and the panorama which opens to the view is the most enchanting of any in Europe. To eclipse it, indeed, one must go to the Zambesi in Africa, or to Niagara in the United States.

Constance was too close to Switzerland and France to be chosen as a place for the internment of the French captives. It was enough for me to pass through it and go forward to Freiburg, archiepiscopal city of

the Grand Duchy of Baden, where alone I could obtain from the bishop of the diocese the powers necessary for enabling me to practise my holy calling.

Freiburg (Brissgau) is an ancient city, dating from the twelfth century, and its cathedral is one of the most curious in all Germany, containing the splendid tombs of its founders—Berchtold and his successors, the Counts of Freiburg. I was graciously received at the great ecclesiastical college, and one of the most distinguished professors—Dr. Stephen Braun, author of an excellent *Journey in Palestine*—introduced me immediately to Monseigneur Lothaire Kuebel, Archbishop of Baden. At the death of this prelate's predecessor, Bismarck proposed to Pope Pius IX. that a man of his own choice—Cardinal Hohenlohe—should be appointed to succeed him; but the Pope refused his sanction, and in the meantime the Chapter of Freiburg chose its senior member, Canon Kuebel, for the vacancy. Pius IX., therefore, nominated the Canon Bishop of Leuca *in*

partibus, and confided to him all the spiritual interests of the Grand Duchy. The Bishop and his clergy consequently lived in perpetual antagonism with the civil power, and difficulties were continually cropping up, extending even to the most humble functions of their mission.

My request was received with the most paternal kindness ; the Bishop granted me full and entire leave to minister anywhere within his diocese, and advised me to go first to Carlsruhe, capital of the Grand Duchy. Here the Catholic clergy gave me a fraternal welcome, and one of them, M. Birk, who was told off for duty in the lazaretto, undertook to introduce me to our sick and wounded on the following morning.

Carlsruhe is a large modern-built town, arranged much on the model of Turin. The greater part of the French prisoners passed through it on their way to the various places of internment. I found the great lazaretto was situated close by the side of the railway station, which is an excellent

arrangement, especially in time of war, as enabling the sick and wounded brought in by rail to be admitted without further discomfort or delay. The hospital is an immense building, and furnished with elegance and comfort; a single one of its wards contained at this time five hundred beds, set apart for the German or French sick and wounded sent up from the battle-fields. This extensive ward was quite full of patients, and we passed through the rows of beds tenanted by the French victims of wounds and sickness, giving a helping hand and breathing words of comfort to each and all.

While we were thus occupied, a tall lady dressed in black, with a white armlet and red cross standing out in strong relief on her severe costume, advanced towards us. It was the Baroness von Berstett, a friend of the Grand Duchess, King William's daughter, by whom she had been charged with the management of this hospital. I saluted her with the profoundest respect,

offering her my humble congratulations on the success of her work, and expressing my admiration for the sublime task to which she had devoted herself.

The Baroness had written to me when I was in Switzerland on my way to Germany, and she now deigned to remember this and to express her regret that she had not been better able to respond to my wishes. She did the honours of the hospital with a grace equal to that she would have exercised in her own drawing-room; she took us all through the building, and on our way she gave us a short sketch of her history. She had lost her mother the year before, she said, and then she determined to devote her life to deeds of charity. At the outbreak of the war, Carlsruhe was made the centre of the hospital service, on account of its proximity to the frontier, and the Grand Duchess had confided to her the organisation of this lazaretto. She had been there when the first wounded man arrived, and intended to remain until the

departure of the last. When we took leave of her she said our visit that day had been a very short one, and that it would be doing a kindness to the poor fellows if I were to renew it.

A more sickening and heartrending scene could scarcely be imagined than that which one met with in the amputation ward of the hospital. Hundreds of men were there, lying on their little iron bedsteads, some without arms, some having lost one or both legs, feet, or hands, and as I passed among them they would try to wave their poor stumps and utter cries and moans which pierced my very soul. When the fever came to add its tortures to the agonising wound, the amputated patient became mad with pain. One evening I was sitting at the bedside of one thus doubly afflicted, watching him as he lay there with haggard eyes, blackened lips, and shaking frame. Suddenly he rose upright on his bed, and raising the stumps of his two arms to heaven he exclaimed,—

“Adieu, my mother! Adieu, France! Adieu, all my comrades!”

With these words he bounded to the floor, rushed through the ward at full speed, upsetting tables, chairs, and bottles of medicine, and then, like a flash of lightning, he jumped through one of the windows. We ran down after him and picked him up. His head, shoulders, and chest were severely lacerated by the glass, pieces of which were still sticking in him, and we had all the trouble in the world in getting him back to his bed. He was so bruised and cut about that his body looked like one huge wound, and his mattress was soon soaked with the blood left in his broken veins after having saturated our own clothing. He died in my arms a few moments afterwards, and no death ever made such a deep impression on the numerous witnesses of it as this one did.

While the war lasted, it was the surgeons of the great lazarettos of Carlsruhe who performed operations on most of the wounded, and heartrending in the extreme

were the scenes which preceded and followed the use of the knife, and saw, and lancet. It usually fell to me to persuade the poor fellows to submit to the operation necessary to save them, and the answer generally was, "Yes, if you will remain with me to assist and hold me." But sometimes the weary patient would obstinately refuse to undergo the ordeal, and then the shattered limb was put in a plaster mould and condemned to total inactivity in the interval preceding death. Numbers of old veterans from the Crimean, Italian, and Mexican wars ended their days in this way, sinking under their old wounds, which had opened afresh, and their new ones more dangerous still.

One Sebastopol soldier, already bearing conspicuous wounds on the forehead, face, and arms, had received a ball in the hip at Wörth. With his dying breath he said to me, "Let the others do as I have done, and our dear old France will not perish."

It must be said that our soldiers were

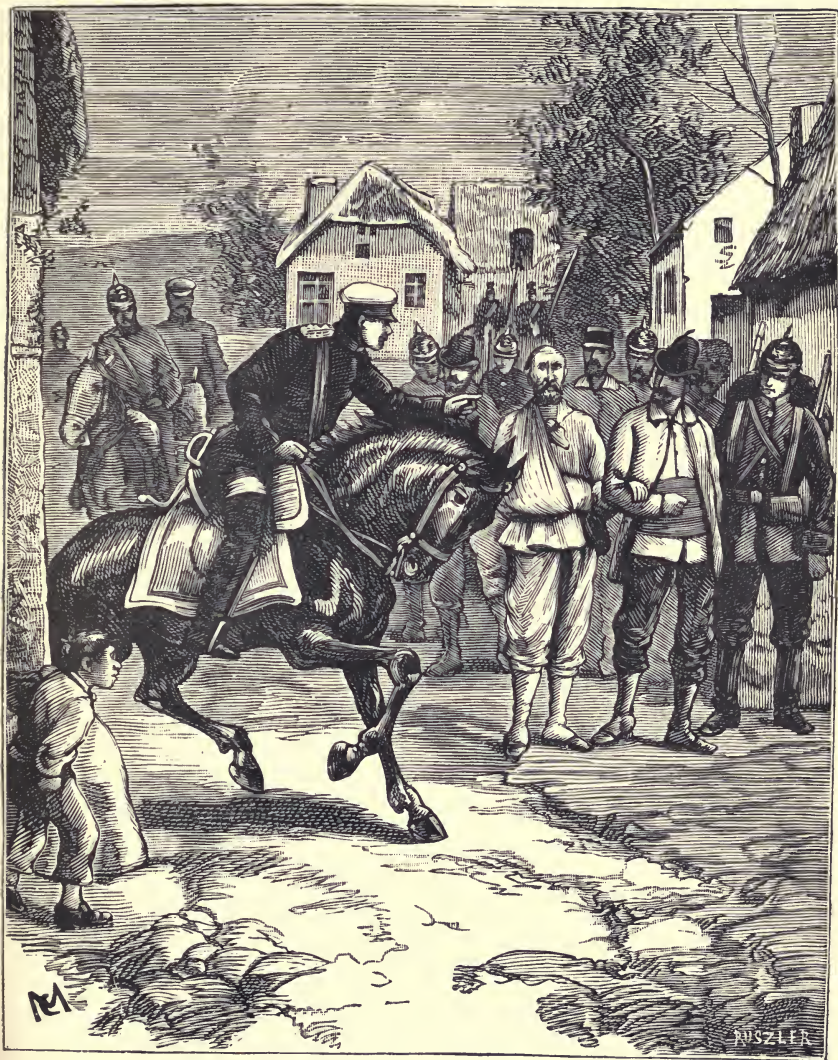
splendidly cared for at Carlsruhe. Their smallest wishes were fulfilled ; books, newspapers, knick-knacks, tobacco, and the thousand and one things which add to the comfort of an invalid were supplied to them *ad libitum*. But I was much pained to see that Protestant books and tracts were also freely distributed among them, and when I expressed my surprise at this to the Baroness I got no answer. One day a footman in gay livery entered the hospital with a large bundle of books profusely illustrated and coloured, and deposited a copy on the bed of each of my sick men. I took one up to see what it was : it bore the title *History of a Bible, told by Itself*. It pretended to prove that a real Christian must close his ears to all the teachings of man, and listen only to the simple word of God as contained in His Bible ! The man went on coolly with his work, and on getting a closer view of him I recognised the livery of the Court of Baden. It was the lackey of Her Highness the Grand Duchess. The Protestant associations here,

as at Ulm and Ingolstadt, were evidently working zealously under favour of the Government.

There were many Turcos among the wounded. They were looked upon as wild beasts in the city, for they had been seen at butchers' shops eating raw flesh and regaling themselves upon uncooked liver. They one and all refused to be amputated even to save their lives.

"Me die," they would say, "me die; me not cut off arm, leg, head. Mahomet not find me whole when rise again in Africa; me not go Paradise."

The Baroness von Berstett was walking with me one evening through the vast ward of the lazaretto, when suddenly the entrance doors were thrown open with more noise than usual, and a number of men-servants followed each other into the place carrying bundles and packages. The patients seemed to know what it meant, for their wan faces lit up with pleasure at the sight of the newcomers.



FRENCH PRISONERS.

“Their Highnesses!” exclaimed the Baroness, and she hastened away from me.

By this time two distinguished ladies had entered, and were advancing towards us. The first was Her Royal Highness Louise Hohenzollern, reigning Grand Duchess of Baden and the King of Prussia's daughter. She bore the name of her grandmother, that queen so popular in Germany on account of her character, her beauty, and her misfortunes, and who had been so basely treated by Napoleon I. The Grand Duchess had rather a haughty and distinguished bearing, but her dress was quite Puritan in its simplicity. Her companion was Her Royal Highness the Princess Marie of Leuchtenberg, granddaughter of Nicholas I., Emperor of Russia, and married to Prince William, brother of the Grand Duke.

A tall gentleman in a swallow-tailed black coat, with long hair flowing over his shoulders, followed upon the heels of the two Princesses. It was the Reverend Mr. Doll,

a Protestant minister, and preacher to the Court, a very zealous pietist, and possessing enormous influence in the country.

The footmen with their packages of good things followed on behind in all the glory of their Court livery, placing the articles one by one in the delicate hands of the Princesses, who in turn presented them to the patients—the Germans first, and after that the Frenchmen.

At this moment the Baroness accosted the Rev. Mr. Doll, and led him to the bedside of a Prussian in the last agony, and the sacrament was administered to the dying man without delay. When this was over Mr. Doll passed along the ward, comforting the men and assiduously delivering books and tracts. I watched his movements closely. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.* Presently he reached the French quarters, and still he pursued his active propaganda. He stayed a long time with one of the men, and sat on the edge of his bed, talking eagerly.

A mother is not more anxious for her

children's safety than is a priest for the safety of the souls confided to him. I approached the reverend gentleman and courteously saluted him. The sight of my black gown apparently troubled him, for he politely rose and returned in silence to his Prussians.

I questioned the sick man as to the purport of Mr. Doll's conversation, and he told me he had tried to make a Protestant of him.

"But, bless you, sir," added the man, "don't you be afraid. We'll receive their presents fast enough, but we don't take much account of their sermons."

The Princesses now came up, and the Baroness von Berstett presented me to their Highnesses. I offered the Grand Duchess my humble congratulations on the noble and successful work she had organised here, assuring her that on my return to France I would let the result of her charitable efforts be known.

"Yes," she replied, "we make no difference here between friends and enemies ; they

are all members of one family, whose welfare I am really happy to watch over day by day. It is an easy task, though, assisted as I am by Frau von Berstett. The dear Baroness is a great favourite of the patients; and would you believe it, Monsieur l'Abbé, many of your Frenchmen weep on leaving her? I have seen it myself."

"Ah, Madame, how much they have suffered!"

"Our own men have suffered quite as much, if not more. The trials of your armies encamped under Metz and Paris are not to be compared with the fatigues of the night marches which my father's troops are making at this moment through mire and snow and ice. I sent away ten thousand pairs of gaiters yesterday for our poor Badeners. Oh! when will it all be over? When shall we get peace again?"

After these words the Princess saluted me coldly and continued her walk through the ward. She stayed for some time at the bedside of a Turco, and made him several pre-

sents. I afterwards learned she had adopted him, and kept him in the palace at Carlsruhe. Our conversation, indeed, had been stiff and cool throughout, and neither of us seemed to feel quite comfortable. At a time like that, how could a French priest be more humble and obsequious to a daughter of King William than I was? But she, with her crowned head, and her power and influence, might she not have found a word of kind encouragement for *him*?

These were my reflections as I turned to regain the Frenchmen's quarters, when Princess William addressed me.

"Have you been a long time with your dear patients, Mr. Chaplain?"

This was a very simple question, but it was worth more than all the conversation with the Grand Duchess. It breathed gentleness, and showed a sympathy which makes a Frenchman's heart beat quickly. This lady further desired to do all she could to assist my men, and distributed many useful things among them which I pointed out as the most

urgent. We chatted a long time,—about Rome, and Italy, and Pius IX., and the war,—and when she left me she said,—

“I leave you with regret, but I shall hope to find you here very often, and if you are in want of support or assistance come to me.”

The sequel showed that her promises were not empty compliments, as promises so often are, but that they came from a heart brimful of kindness and charity.

On the 30th October the fatal news reached the Carlsruhe hospital that the capitulation of Metz had been signed on the previous day by Marshal Bazaine. At the same time I was informed that a numerous convoy of prisoners had been sent to Rastadt, where the absence of any French chaplain rendered my presence necessary. Therefore, as the sick and wounded at the capital no longer required my services, I left Carlsruhe on the following day for Rastadt.

This town was, in its origin, a petty fief of the Counts von Eberstein, and the Mar-

graves of Baden made it one of their privileged citadels. In 1424 it was sacked and burnt by the Strasburg militia in a war the bitter recollections of which still serve to keep alive the old hatred between Badeners and Alsacians. It soon rose from its ruins, however, and acquired the importance of a great fortified place, threatening France on the banks of the Rhine. The Margraves built an immense castle there, to serve as an ordinary residence for the widows of the rulers of Baden. In 1714 the famous treaty between the Emperor and the King of France was signed there, and under its walls, on the 6th July, 1793, Moreau defeated the Austrians, who were ravaging our frontiers. It was to this place also, on the 9th Floréal of the year VII., that the French Commissioners, Roberjot and Bonnier, came to sign the preliminaries of peace with the Imperialists, and fell into an ambush and were murdered. At the present day it is one of the strongest places in Europe.

I got a cordial welcome from the Catholic

clergy of Rastadt, and I found my task easy and consoling ; for the last two months they had been labouring heroically among the numerous victims of the war confided to their good offices, and now nine thousand prisoners, among whom typhus and small-pox were raging, were under their care.

Here, as at the other places, a preliminary visit to the military authorities was indispensable. The Prussian General von Vaag received me with the greatest courtesy ; the Governor, Herr Diez, too, a native of Baden, was exceedingly kind, and sent me without delay the following document :—

“FORTRESS OF RASTADT.

“Chaplain E. Guers is authorised to visit all the lazarettos, barracks, and depôts of French prisoners. This permit is not transferable.

“By order of the Governor,

“DIEZ.

“November 4th, 1870.”

Here was a new field of labour opened to me !

There were three great hospitals in

Rastadt: the first, called Kriegspital, was full of sick and wounded Germans and Alsacians. The second was known as the Friedenspital; one half of it was devoted to French amputated patients, and the other half to those Frenchmen who had sufficiently recovered to be moved to the northern fortresses. A great number of these convalescents, however, were sent off before they were thoroughly recovered, and, falling ill again *en route*, the greater part of them died on the way. A hundred of them, at least, had already fallen victims to this system. The name of the third hospital was Bernardskirche. It was originally the old parish church of Rastadt, dedicated to St. Bernard, and abandoned as soon as the new one, dedicated to St. Alexander, was built. Here two hundred small-pox and fever patients were lying, several of whom were dying every day. Those who entered it might with truth have repeated that well-known phrase: "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here." As soon as they fell ill it was a

matter of certainty that the contagion would carry them off.

One evening was set apart for the visit to those of the prisoners which were kept in confinement and employed in forced labour under the mouths of the cannon with which the citadel and the forts were bristling. I appointed to meet them next day, Sunday, in an immense hut placed at our disposal as most suitable for the celebration of Divine service. I was conducted to the spot by a young lawyer from Clermont-Ferrand, M. Edmond Guillaume, formerly a Pontifical Zouave. He had enlisted in the French army for the campaign, and was taken prisoner at Strasburg, and he had for a long time been without any news either from Rome or from France.

The mobiles of the Rhine formed the greater portion of this encampment, which had been doubled by the arrival of the Strasburg garrison, and was about to be centupled by the arrivals announced from Metz. In a casemate, used as the infirmary

of the citadel, a large number of Alsacians were lying, tended by a young French doctor, engaged for the duration of the war. There were not only cases of small-pox here, but of leprosy also. These Alsacians were especially delighted to see me, and stated that they had even been deprived of hearing mass the previous Tuesday, which was All Saints' Day. The service in the hut next day was the most consoling of any that I have conducted throughout my whole ministration. The building was crowded to excess, and many had to content themselves with looking through the open doors and windows.

A great many officers of the French army were interned at Rastadt. They passed their days, as a rule, fishing with the angling-rod in the waters of the Murg, which runs through the city before flowing into the Rhine at the frontier. There they might be seen, day after day, leaning over the sides of the little wooden bridges, silent and thoughtful. They did not seem to catch many fish, and they appeared to be more engaged in scanning the

faces of the passers-by than in watching their floats. Their irreligious conduct caused great surprise in the town.

"None of your officers," it was remarked to me, "ever go to church or to meeting—ours always go."

Alas! silence was my only possible reply in explanation of this practical atheism, the pernicious example of which on the part of the officers has had such evil effects on the rank and file.

Without having the luxury and comfort of those of Carlsruhe, the lazarettos of Rastadt were very well kept, and, thanks to the efforts of several noble souls, they were supplied with all that was necessary. The Duchess of Hamilton was the first to visit our sick men, and was munificent in the gifts she distributed among them. The Countess Zeppelin, too, behaved like a real mother to our poor captives, from the first to the last day of the hard trial. Every morning she arrived with cartloads of linen, clothing, bottles with something in them,

medicines, and knick-knacks, and as she divided them among the men she had a kind word for each. One day, after having distributed all she had brought, she stopped before a subaltern just deprived of a limb.

"Ah, my poor friend," said she, "there is nothing left for you."

"Madame," he replied, "a smile from you will content me."

Here was an instance of French gallantry, cropping up amid the most horrible surroundings! A Turco, bald and black, and repulsive in his dirt and ugliness, on another occasion passed close to her.

"See, Turco," she said, offering him a long white shirt, "here is a new suit for you."

He donned it on the instant, as proud as Artaban, and strutted round the wards shouting, "Me go marry now!"

These incidents, trifling in themselves, had the effect of making the poor fellows forgetful of their miseries for a moment, and a little more resigned to their fate.

✓ Numbers of our wounded owed their return to health to the admirable nursing of the brave Countess Zeppelin, who did not shrink from soiling her aristocratic fingers in dressing the most frightful and sickening wounds. I noticed that many of the men would only consent to amputation after she had advised and even urged it, and when they yielded it was on condition that she should hold in her hands the limb about to be taken off. The Countess, however, did not limit her good deeds to the Rastadt dépôt, but extended them to the whole of Germany, and there was not a single place of internment which did not profit by her assistance both in money and goods. If there was ever a lady who merited some national recognition for what she did for France during this period, it was the Countess Zeppelin. Yet she was never even thanked!

Another lady, Fräulein Julie Schill, was anxious to devote herself to our poor wounded. She gained admittance to one

of the wards, and passed the whole of her time there, fearing, and not without reason, that if she once went out she would not be allowed to return. The Prussian managers, however, would not permit her to remain, and gave her peremptory notice to go. In vain the French patients begged that she might be left with them—the Baden soldiers dragged her out. All the authorities of Rastadt were then implored to readmit her to the hospital, but it was all in vain; they remained deaf and dumb to all entreaties. At last, one day, the young lady came and knelt on the doorstep of the lazaretto, until the governor, conquered by so much heroism, ordered the doors to be opened to her. Among all the stories of Christian charity this one deserves to be inscribed in letters of gold.

On November 6th, in the darkness of night, I quitted this abode of sadness in company with the Countess Zeppelin. We had heard of the sudden arrival of the first convoy of prisoners from Metz, numbering

one hundred and fifty officers and two thousand men, of whom two hundred were invalids. We were in time to see the latter come in, and they slowly and painfully filed into the chilly hospital yards, and crowded into the vestibules and wards, crowding round the stoves, numbed, shivering, and pallid, with haggard looks and tainted breath,—veritable walking skeletons. Every one pressed round to assist them.

“We have been tramping for the last week,” they said, “and we are dying of fatigue and hunger.”

The French patients already provided for behaved nobly at this juncture; all who could gave up their beds to the newcomers, and we passed the night in washing, warming, clothing, and combing the miserable objects, and putting them one by one to bed. Very few of them had energy enough left to put on the shirts or knitted articles handed to them, and they had to be undressed and dressed again like infants. The Countess Zeppelin was foremost in this

charitable work that night, and saved many a poor wretch from certain death.

There was a prisoner at Rastadt who was captain of a vessel, and who had been the soul of the defence at Strasburg. His name was M. du Petit-Thouars, and by reason of his excellent character and great influence he had even been able to gain the favour of the Prussian generals, and to obtain a little indulgence for the prisoners in this dépôt. He spent his whole time in lightening the burdens of the captives, and his advice and protection was of the utmost value to us.

Not less deep is our gratitude towards Herr Franz Simon Meyer, banker, of Rastadt. His son-in-law, Baron von Villier, lieutenant of dragoons in the Baden army, was the first prisoner Napoleon III. took at Saarbrück, and he was invited to the Emperor's table that same evening. He was now interned at Montpellier, and treated with the greatest kindness and consideration, and it was owing to this circumstance that

his family acted in a really princely manner to our prisoners, both officers and men.

The castle of Rastadt is the most imposing fortified place of any in South Germany. Some officers were shut up there, with a few French priests, and the Baden Government had made it its Bastille, where every suspect was kept a close prisoner without trial. Mons. François Fritsch, curé of Chervilliers, near Schlettstadt, was there in solitary confinement. His village having been occupied by the Prussians, and the French having attempted to retake it, the good curé desired to intervene to save his parishioners' lives. He was thereupon accused of having exhorted the Baden troops not to fire on the French, and he was bound and taken to General Demling. "You are a sly fox," said the General, "but we'll find a nice hole for you;" and the unfortunate priest was driven by forced marches to Rastadt, pinioned like a criminal!

An aged man named Bochelen, curé of Weckolsheim, near Neuf-Brisach, was taken

between two fires on the 3rd September. All his parishioners had fled in dismay, and he took refuge with the curé of the neighbouring village of Logelheim. He returned to Weckolsheim on the 14th, and found it pillaged, ruined, and deserted. On the 15th he went back again to his friend, without meeting a soul. On the morning of the 16th he was arrested by order of General Schmeling, and accused of having gone to pass the night at Neuf-Brisach to arrange for a sortie by the besieged, and it was the fact that on that day the troops *had* made a vigorous effort, from which the Germans suffered severely. He, too, was bound, insulted, struck by the soldiery, and taken more dead than alive to Rastadt. As he was driven along the Baden peasants cried after him, "That's the French parson who fired on our Landwehr! He killed twenty Germans! He blew up a whole regiment quartered in his church! He tried to assassinate the King of Prussia and our Grand Duke!"

The Abbé Bochelen was lying on a truckle-bed, quite abandoned, without winter clothing or even a breviary. I promised him I would try to do something for him at Carlsruhe.

This castle of Rastadt, transformed into a State prison, also enjoys another kind of lugubrious reputation. The people believe in the existence of a White Lady within its precincts. As brilliant as a star, she has been seen wandering about on the darkest nights, with a large bunch of keys hanging from her waist, and going in and out the hundreds of apartments on the various floors of the castle. When a great danger, a war, or a death threatens any of the reigning family, the people say she is sure to appear. She was seen in June 1870, and war broke out in the following month!

The White Lady was seen again during my stay at Rastadt, and shortly afterwards the Grand Duke's brother received a severe wound in France! The belief is so firmly established that the sentinels on night duty

at the castle are always in a state of dread ; and a brave Baden colonel named Hieronymus assured me on his honour that having passed a night at the castle the apparition was seen by him.

The Ducal family of Baden have also a great predilection for the Cistercian monastery at Lichtenthal, founded by their ancestors, and of which some of their princesses had been abbesses. It is a magnificent building, and large silver and golden lamps are kept burning there continually. When the White Lady takes her nightly walks at Rastadt Castle, there is a corresponding phenomenon at Lichtenthal, all the lamps being suddenly extinguished. This was the case in 1870, and the reigning family, although Protestant, were greatly agitated by it.

On the 8th November I addressed a letter from Rastadt to Her Royal Highness the Princess William, who had shown herself so friendly to me at the Carlsruhe lazaretto, asking for two favours. One was that she would inquire of the Minister of War at

Carlsruhe what had become of my brother, a sub-lieutenant of the 1st Engineers at Metz, of whom I had heard nothing since the commencement of the siege ; and the second was that she would intervene in favour of the unfortunate Abbé Bochelen, a close prisoner in Rastadt Castle, whose sad and undeserved experience I recounted.

A few days after M. Bochelen was released, and General Goetz, the Minister of War at Carlsruhe, sent me a telegram stating that my brother, who had been sent to Cologne with all the officers of the 1st Engineers, was at that moment in Bremen. Thus I had another cause for gratitude to Her Royal Highness the Princess.

In the meantime, Monseigneur Kuebel had appointed a regular chaplain for Rastadt—the Abbé Unversagt, of Kiechlinsbergen, near Vieux-Brisach ; this gentleman therefore arrived and took over the care of the French soldiers, and remained among them till the end of the captivity. He was a man of tact and prudence, and filled the difficult position

well. Insurrectionary schemes floated about among the prisoners at Rastadt, as they had done among those of Hohenasperg. Old uniforms of Baden soldiers had been found hidden away among them, but these could at the very most have served for a few isolated evasions, and could not possibly have contributed anything towards a general revolt.

The military authorities, however, profited by this incident to remove our prisoners from some of the forts and encamp them in huts within range of the guns. Their chaplain was forbidden to visit them, and some of the medical men even attempted to exclude him from the hospital, but the high influence of M. du Petit-Thouars was able to smooth down these difficulties, and preserve to our sick soldiers the services of their spiritual adviser and comforter.

The Abbé Unversagt remained faithful to his post up to the day when the prisoners were sent back to their country. But he would not leave the spot where three hundred and fifty-five of them were interred in

foreign soil without raising over their place of burial a monument worthy of their memory. It was a handsome stone obelisk, crowned with a cross, and surrounded with iron chains, and bearing the following inscription :—

TO THE FRENCH PRISONERS

WHO DIED AT RASTADT,

1870-71.

By their Comrades.

CHAPTER V.

Passage of the Rhine—Strasburg in Ashes—The Prussian Mode of utilising Railways—Tomb of General Desaix—Horrible Aspect of the Cemetery of St. Gall—A City in Ruins—The Siege—Strasburg Cathedral after the Siege—The Cathedral Cross outraged and revenged—Trains of Prisoners *en route*—Germanising of Alsace and Lorraine.

MANY were the times, on my way from Freiburg or Carlsruhe, that I had saluted the mysterious shadows of Strasburg in the distance, looming up through the mists of the Rhine like some majestic mausoleum, and I ardently desired, like Jeremiah, to go and weep on its sad and stupendous ruins. My long conversations with M. du Petit-Thouars, its gallant defender, had greatly increased my desire to see the place. And yet, at this time, to gain admission into

Strasburg was neither easy nor agreeable for a Frenchman, as the jealousy and suspicion of the enemy watching at the gates had to be circumvented.

On my way from Rastadt I passed for the last time the ancient city, now in ashes, and I determined, in spite of all possible obstacles, to pay it, as it were, a visit of condolence.

The Baden train stopped at Kehl, between which place and Strasburg the broad Rhine flows. The railway station here was burnt to the ground, all the houses reduced to ruins, all the walls cracked or thrown down. I trembled with nervousness and timidity as I wended my way alone across the country devastated by fire and bullets, but I reached the river bank without interference. The river did not seem to run quiet and clear as it did at Constance, nor rough and tumbling as it is at Schaffhausen, but its huge waves flowed on heavily with a mournful sound, as of torrents of tears and bitter anguish.

The famous bridge of Kehl, that marvel of modern architecture, uniting France with Germany, was still in position, standing in the centre of the stream, but with both approaches cut off, presenting of itself a deplorable symbol of the desolation and mourning still spreading further and further among the two peoples on either side the water. At the outbreak of hostilities the French blew up the first arch of the bridge on the Strasbourg side, and the Germans did the same on their side at Kehl. A bridge of boats was now stretched across the river in close proximity to the bridge, rocking and shaking and rather unsafe to look at; but a crowd of persons on foot and on horseback, or in carriages and carts, were passing safely over it.

I had scarcely arrived at the centre of this unstable road, beaten and splashed by the waves of the Rhine, when a confused jumble of guttural sounds and shrill and discordant cries fell upon my ears; they had never before been tortured by such a savage con-

cert. It proceeded from a regiment of Prussian Landwehr-men on the march, passing along the French bank, now tramping in time to its triumphal music, and now to its loud "Hurrahs!" echoed and re-echoed on the distant hills. On approaching a little closer I could distinguish some semblance to the tune of the German National Hymn, "The Watch on the Rhine." I felt humbled and depressed at the sight of this moving mass, with their spiked helmets glittering in the sun. Here I was for the first time in presence of our implacable conquerors on my native soil! I hastened onward.

The German side of the river which I had just left was a smiling oasis in comparison with the French side, on which I now found myself. All was utter ruin and desolation! The Prussians were, however, making feverish efforts to repair the mischief which had been wrought; their first care being to lay down lines of rails to connect Strasburg with Germany and with the battle-fields in France, and many were already in working

order, and encumbered with heavy freight of all kinds—guns, stores, provisions, and arms.

Every train arriving from or starting off in the direction of France was guarded by soldiers armed to the teeth, and with hostages to answer for their safety. In every locality a list of forty persons of note had been drawn up who were requisitioned by turns for these journeys. The youngest were placed in the front carriages or on the engine, and the others in the waggon at the rear. At every principal station the roll was called, and any hostage failing to answer to his name was condemned to a year's imprisonment and a fine of twelve hundred francs; for a second offence he was fined five thousand francs and deported to a distant fortress in Prussia. Every commune, also, in which any of these trains got off the line, whether by accident or by the rails being tampered with, had to pay a fine of twenty-five thousand francs. The way in which the railways were utilised by the Germans, not only here, and at this

time, but everywhere and all throughout the war, speaks volumes for the care and forethought exercised by Moltke and the German staff, and this, without doubt, is the capital point of modern strategy.

An avenue of beech-trees, spared in the midst of the ruin which surrounded them, pointed out the entrance to the heroic city, and when once I had passed through this the real scene of the struggle opened out before me. It was the abomination of desolation ! Trees stripped of their branches and sawn off at the roots were lying all over the ground ; mere shells of houses burnt from garret to cellar cropped up on every side, some of the *débris* now still smoking. Even before the Prussians arrived, the inhabitants, or owners, or French soldiers, were compelled for strategical reasons to perform some of these acts of vandalism ; and peaceful cottages, rich villas, busy factories, magnificent mansions, with their gardens and parks, were ruthlessly destroyed with self-denying stoicism. And when the enemy came the devastation was

made more complete ; the walls that remained were reduced to dust and drenched with human blood.

A monument of red sandstone now presented itself to my view ; it was capped with a bronze bust, and on its pedestal I read the following inscription :—

TO GENERAL DESAIX.

ARMY OF THE RHINE.

1800.

All around the soil was thickly strewn with bullets, spent shells, and broken weapons ; but the monument itself had remained untouched, having escaped the hail of projectiles which fell thick around it from the guns of the General's own countrymen.

But here is the cemetery of St. Gall, with its shady walks. Its boundary walls, however, were levelled to the ground, and the large gates torn off their hinges. A notice written in large black letters on a white

ground was still in its place, and I read : "It is forbidden to touch the flowers, trees, or gravestones." I entered. Tombs were profaned, marble slabs broken, trees cut down. The peaceful resting-place had been turned into a vast heap of ruins. Several persons were wandering about in search of relics missing from the graves of those who had been dear to them, and were loudly complaining at their inability to find what they sought. A great many skirmishes had taken place in this enclosure ; every tomb and gravestone had made a valuable cover for the combatants, and fights of the kind in such places as these are always doubly fierce and sanguinary.

On leaving this terrible scene behind me, I came in sight of the fortifications of Strasbourg with large gaping breaches in them. I reached the Austerlitz gate, keeping well on my guard. Some Prussian soldiers were posted there, closely scrutinising the passers in and out, and arresting any about whom there was the slightest suspicion. My

peaceful costume no doubt inspired some confidence, and I passed unmolested through their ranks, amid shouts of laughter and clouds of tobacco smoke.

Beyond the Austerlitz bastions the view which presented itself was heartrending in the extreme. The towers, which were the last remains of the defensive works of old Strasburg, only stood up like shapeless and mutilated trunks, and the walls were breached and riddled and razed. To the right and left of the railway station whole rows of houses were wiped out completely, a hideous heap of calcined ruins under which an animal could hardly have found a shelter. The streets were full of mud and half-thawed snow, and puddles had formed in the depressions in the pavements caused by falling projectiles. The grimy thoroughfares were, however, full of people—soldiers marching to and fro; merchants from beyond the Rhine, shouting and offering their wares; knots of curious sightseers—Germans, old and young—staring open-mouthed but self-

satisfied at the devastation wrought by the bullets hurled hither by their sons and brethren. There were few Strasburgers to be seen, and very few kind and sympathetic faces ; and when the eye passed over the imposing ruin which was once the Temple Neuf of Strasburg, and rested at last on the mutilated towers of the ruined Cathedral, it saw bending over in the direction of France a black-and-white rag, worthy emblem of death, hanging down torn and disconsolate over the doomed city.

According to the official report sent in to the Minister of Marine by M. du Petit-Thouars upon the siege of Strasburg, the gates of the city were closed on August 5th by the French authorities, consisting of General Uhrich, the military commander ; Vice-Admiral Exelmans ; Baron Pron, the Prefect ; and M. Human, the Mayor. The effective of the defending force only numbered three thousand men, among which was the 1st Battalion of the Wissembourg

Garde Mobile, composed of eight hundred men under the orders of Major Stark ; seven to eight hundred men of the 74th and 78th regiments, deprived of their officers and placed under Commander Gaveau ; five to six hundred marine artillerymen ; forty-three sailors ; and, lastly, seventy-four conscripts of 1869. During the siege this feeble force was supplemented by eight hundred marching men under the orders of M. de Montmigny, and two companies of franc-tireurs led by Messrs. Liès, Bodard, and Geisen.

Opposed to this handful, spread over the whole perimeter, were sixty-three thousand Germans, commanded by the Baden General von Werder. Twenty to one, therefore. The clearing of the ground outside the city was consequently of the first necessity, as otherwise, owing to the numerous trees and habitations between it and the river, the enemy might have crept up unobserved. Every day a little band of Sharpshooters was sent out to keep up a fusillade with the

German advanced posts, while behind them came the soldiers and sailors levelling everything to the ground. This work of destruction seemed doubly regrettable just then, as it was the time of ripening fruit and of crops ready to reap.

General Werder opened fire on the 13th August. It must be stated here, to the shame and confusion of the French Government, which had just declared with a light heart the most foolish and unnecessary of wars, that, amongst all the fortifications of Strasburg, it had neglected to erect a single masked battery, and our gunners were thus fully exposed to the deadly German fire, and cut off in detail.

In his admirable account of the siege of Strasburg, Father Joseph gives a vivid description of its sad and sanguinary phases.* “No bombardment,” he says, “can be compared with this one; Metz, Paris, Belfort, are left far behind. We must go back to

* *La Captivité à Ulm*, p. 14.

the destruction of Jerusalem to form any idea of the scenes of death and ruin. The nights of the 18th, 19th, 23rd, 24th, 25th, and 26th of August surpassed in horror all that it is possible to conceive. The deafening din commenced at eight o'clock in the evening and was kept up till morning. It was a continual rolling of thunder and hissing of bullets, with the crash of falling walls, oceans of flame bursting up from all parts of the town, and agonising and plaintive cries. It is impossible to describe the night of the 24th. The three hundred pieces of artillery which surrounded the place simultaneously belched forth their fire, bullets, and shells, and all over the city cries of 'Fire!' were heard, mingling with the frightful crash of bursting projectiles. The town indeed was like a lake of flaming brimstone. Multitudes of women and children were flying from their homes, fortunate if they were not struck down on the way. It was on this night that the museum, with its splendid pictures, and the library, containing

three hundred thousand volumes, were destroyed; and of all these treasures of literature, art, and science only a handful of dust was left, soon to be scattered by the wind. It was thought that with one more night like that every one of the inhabitants would be buried beneath the ruins or burnt alive in the general conflagration. The Bishop tried to move General Werder to pity, but the moment he returned the bombardment broke out afresh. About midnight we were able to contemplate a sublime but horrible spectacle—the Cathedral, that eighth wonder of the world, was in flames. It was a heart-stirring sight. That same night, too, the hospital caught fire. The number of inhabitants who were crushed and mutilated was estimated at two thousand, and there were more dead than wounded. It was evident Strasburg must fall. This was now the forty-sixth day of the siege, and there were eight thousand homeless people, crowding into the churches or hiding in pits dug at the foot of the ramparts, and eight hundred

houses had been destroyed.* Of the garrison, more than a thousand soldiers had been struck down, and the hospitals were filled with their wounded and amputated. Towards five o'clock in the evening of September 27th, the guns of the town ceased firing, and a white flag was hoisted on the Cathedral. Next day the garrison was marched off into captivity, and the Germans entered the town headed by their fifes and drums."

It is no longer French, this city, which for two centuries had been the right hand of the country.

The incomparable Cathedral, which even at the time of the Terror in 1793 had been respected, was now a sad and sorry spectacle. I entered. Its magnificent stained glass windows, its organs, its statues, its columns, were all shivered by bombshells, and lay shattered upon the flag-stones within or upon the ground without; the only thing which

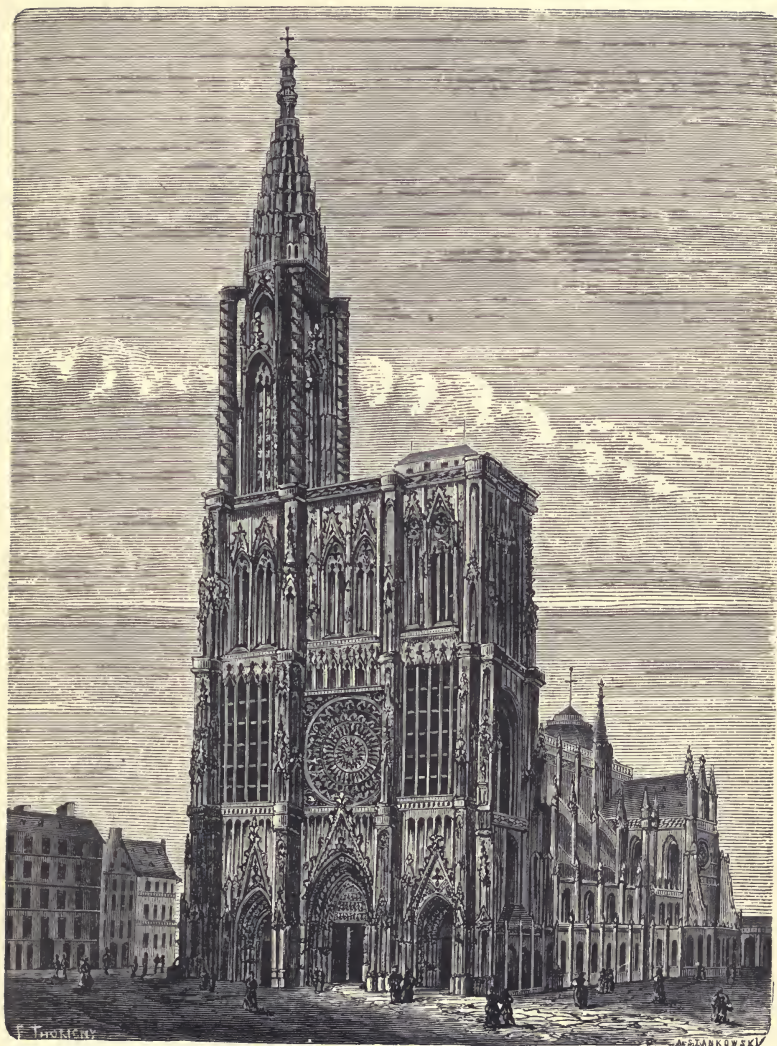
* An official report says that only twenty-five houses in the whole city remained intact.

remained whole was the clock. I went up on the tower, and over my head, at the top of the mutilated spire, the iron cross stretched its arms aloft: this also had been sacrilegiously struck and insulted.

It appeared that as soon as the bombardment was decided upon, the Badeners, always old enemies of the Alsacians, noisily proclaimed their intention of showing off their prowess against Strasburg. The people came in shoals from all parts of the Grand Duchy to enjoy the exhilarating sight of the siege—at a good safe distance though,—at Kehl, on the other side of the Rhine. According as the dark work in the trenches went forward, the audacity of the soldiers grew and increased. They made heavy bets with each other, and this sacred cross was the subject of one of the first wagers. A Baden soldier exclaimed,—

“Half-a-pint of brandy that I hit the cross!”

“Don’t do it,” said one of his comrades.
“It will bring you bad luck.”



STRASBURG CATHEDRAL.

"Fire away! Fire away!" shouted in chorus his more gay companions. "You won't win the wager."

The man took aim, fired, and struck the cross just between the two arms. His comrades were amazed, and cheered him loudly; the brandy he had won was brought, and he drank it at a draught. Next day his company was sent to Schlettstadt, where they burnt the railway station and invested the place. The first cannon shot fired on the French side struck the sacrilegious Badener full in the chest, and he fell to the ground, his arms stretched out like a cross!

"The Strasburg cross revenged," said some of those around him.

The triumphal entry of the Prussians filled the cup of bitterness of the Strasburgers, and one of them, writing on the subject for these pages, says: "On the day following, the King of Prussia ordered a solemn service, a sort of *Te Deum*, to be held in one of the Protestant churches of the town. There, accordingly, in the presence of an audience

of soldiers still reeking with the powder they had burned against us, and of officers who, map in hand, had pointed out the buildings to be reduced to ruins, and in presence, too, of the breaches made by the Prussian cannon in the walls of that very church, a royal chaplain raised his voice in praise and thanksgiving to the Being who made the Germans invincible, mocking at the misfortune of France and Strasburg, and thanking Heaven for its favour and support, praying at the same time that the German armies might be further protected in the work of chastisement they had undertaken against an arrogant nation !”

The whole population of Strasburg were revolted at this parade of hypocritical pietism, and Protestants and Catholics united in condemning it.

Up to the end of hostilities, Strasburg was the place to which the French prisoners were directed previous to their being forwarded across the frontier; and during the few minutes I passed at the railway station

at least ten trains arrived, each consisting of an immense number of trucks crammed full of French soldiers, for the most part sick or broken down with fatigue. They were packed as closely as possible, without seats or anything to lean upon, sometimes in cattle-trucks and sometimes in mere roofless trollies. In each corner stood a Prussian soldier, with loaded revolver in his hand and loaded rifle over his shoulder, and on their arrival at the station the four sentinels in each truck descended one at a time to the platform to drink a bock and devour a sour-kROUT, but if any of the Frenchmen made a movement to get down he was seized, threatened with the revolver, or struck with the flat of a sabre.

What a number of lives would have been saved had there been a well-organised system of relief at that station! As it was, I had the great pleasure of making a liberal distribution of food to the poor fellows, half dead with hunger, thirst, and fatigue. But to have met all demands it would have been neces-

sary to remain there day and night with heaps of provisions to hand.

Alsace-Lorraine is *Reichsland* to-day, that is, placed directly under the German Empire without being the dependency in particular of any of its sovereigns respectively. The demesne is owned by the German Confederation taken as a whole, and represented by the Emperor at Berlin. It is the prey upon which the talons of the black German eagle are becoming more tightly fixed every day, thanks to the constant multiplication of strong places bristling with cannon, on the building of which hundreds of millions are being spent.

In 1870 Strasburg only possessed a ring of fortifications. It is now surrounded by twelve huge forts, nine of which are on the Rhine, besides which powerful outworks have been constructed, and the plain all around, traversed by the canal from the Rhone to the Rhine, the Ill, and the Breusch, can be laid under water at short notice.

At Metz, again, the fortified enceinte has

been rendered still more redoubtable. There are now nineteen bastions surrounded with ditches and protected by thirteen advanced works, and a belt of eight detached and independent forts forming a circle of twenty miles ! Furnished with cuirassed and iron clad towers, these forts can bid defiance to any assault. Thus has Germany, during its few years of occupation, done a vast deal more to strengthen these places than France did, in spite of her great power and resources, during the space of two centuries !

To those having the military power at their command, and the millions of the indemnity in their pockets, this material Germanisation is of course easy ; but to Germanise the hearts and minds of the people is quite another thing. Marshal Manteuffel, the first Governor of Alsace-Lorraine, failed to do it, notwithstanding his seductions and promises. Under his government of apostasy there was no surer way of arriving at success in any career whatever than to possess the privilege of being one of the annexed. That was the

ignoble key that opened all the doors. His policy, however, had such meagre results that Prince Hohenlohe, who succeeded him, although as polite and courteous as a Parisian, was tempted to have recourse to severe methods, and plunge Alsace-Lorraine into sequestration! In their official language they call Frenchmen "venomous plants," which must be extirpated at any cost. And the régime of penalties, confiscations, expropriation, and extradition has been called into existence to accomplish this. By putting the axe to the root of the tree—that is, with its Germanisation of the schools—Germany hopes to succeed at last.*

It is narrated that, a short time ago, a Prussian inspector, on officially visiting an Alsatian school, took particular notice of a

* *Translator's Note.*—Early in June of the present year (1890) Prince Hohenlohe addressed a letter to the Bishop of Strasburg, requesting him to remind his clergy that the use of the French language was absolutely prohibited, not only in the performance of Divine service, but in religious instruction.

neat little lad with flaxen hair and dressed in black, and the following colloquy took place between them :—

“ How old are you, my boy ? ”

“ Twelve.”

“ What is your name ? ”

“ Jean Schwab.”

“ Have you a father ? ”

“ He died for his country.”

“ That’s all right. Now tell me, as you have been learning geography, which are the principal nations of Europe.”

“ France——”

“ Stop! Why do you put France first? You must know, you little good-for-nothing, that the most illustrious, the most powerful, the richest, the most beautiful country, is Germany.”

The boy, pale and trembling, repeated, “ France ! ”

“ You stupid urchin! you cannot even point out on the map where France is situated.”

The little Alsacian drew himself up to his

full height in the midst of his schoolfellows, all flushed with excitement, and with a firm hand he unbuttoned his black coat and waistcoat, and striking his little breast he exclaimed: "France is *there*, sir, in our hearts!"

Hail, heroic Strasburg! lost sentinel of mother France, falling and bleeding for her on the threshold of the field of honour! Hail, noble Alsace-Lorraine! classical land of bravery and fidelity, which gave to France the stock whence her old kings sprang, the type of her ancient charters and her modern liberties, and to Europe the most illustrious founders of noble houses, both royal and imperial, holding proudly aloft unto this day thy glorious and unsullied name! Hail to thee, who hast supplied the country with as many valorous chiefs as other provinces have sent obscure soldiers! Mayest thou grow green again one day under the softer sky and sweeter air of our beloved France! Adieu, unlucky Strasburg! Thou, at least, preferring, like the sacred virgins, immolation

and death to profanation and dishonour, thou didst fall worthy of thyself and of us ! May the palm of resurrection due to thy martyrdom grow and flourish upon thy ruins ! Mayest thou soon find again the palpitating breast of thy mother, and imbibe at long draughts the happiness of a common life and a common nationality !

But in the cold countries of the North four hundred thousand Frenchmen—captives, and plunged in grief and misfortune—are waiting for succour. I must hasten across the Rhine again.

Soon my back is turned on the ancient city with its stately cathedral, and presently it is no more than a speck on the horizon ; but the sight of Strasburg in ashes has so powerfully increased the ardour of my courage, that it is now equal to facing the deadliest perils, and to penetrating without flinching into the very heart of Prussia.

CHAPTER VI.

From the Banks of the Rhine to the Mouth of the Weser
— Heidelberg—Mannheim—Darmstadt—Mayence
— Frankfort-on-the-Main — Coblentz — Cologne—
Prussian Rules for the French Prisoners' Conduct—
Aix-la-Chapelle—Bismarck's Unpopularity—Düsseldorf—
Neuss—Wesel—Minden—Hanover—Oldenburg—
Bremen and the Flag of the 1st Regiment of
Engineers.

THE ordinary tourist on the borders of the Rhine, his mind being stored with his recollections of legend and history, dreams only of ancient towns and majestic Gothic architecture, sumptuous cathedrals and crenated ramparts, or of steep banks over which rise ruins of gloomy mansions, coquettish villas still full of life, neat villages, and green meadows.

This was all very well some twenty years

ago, but now, as Tissot says,* "The Rhine is a river of blood, and its banks are bristling with loaded cannon. The only impression one gets on the spot is that of war and misery. In place of poetry and art, the only thing that meets one's eyes is 'Germania,' with rifle resting on her arm, and flanked by batteries of artillery. From Heilbronn to Heidelberg the country is of rare loveliness. The meadows are fresh and velvety like those of Switzerland—dotted with flowers and watered by brooks—the line of sight being cut here and there by pear and apple trees in full bloom. According as we approach Heidelberg the vegetation develops and displays itself with greater exuberance, chestnut and walnut trees mingling their dark verdure with the gayer foliage of the beech. Here are the first houses of the university town: they are pretty villas in the Italian style, set in the lovely framework of the landscape."

* *Pays des Millions*, p. 48.

In the severe winter season of 1870, when I approached it, Heidelberg was far from having that smiling aspect. The country for miles around was deep with snow, and the beautiful city itself was lying under a white shroud. A few scattered pedestrians were passing along in the neighbourhood of the station; some servants were at the half-opened doors of the houses; some retailers of beer or of "myrtille" sweetmeats, the speciality of the country, were waiting for customers behind their counters; such was the morning aspect of the place. It will be more lively in the evening, when thousands of students, in their many-coloured costumes, will bring life and gaiety into the arteries of the city. But my object was to pass the day at the hospital.

There were two lazarettos at Heidelberg, one for wounded officers and the other for soldiers who, healthy at starting, had fallen ill on their journey into exile. They were few in number, and a few hours sufficed to visit and relieve them. On my leaving the

hospital two convalescent officers offered to accompany me on the following day to the castle and the University, the two places in the city most worthy a visit. It was an amiable way of expressing their gratitude towards me, and of course I could not refuse.

There are very few cities in which it is so easy to find one's way about as Heidelberg. It consists chiefly of two wide thoroughfares—the Hauptstrasse and the Plockstrasse—and is well provided with gardens, palaces, squares, and magnificent mansions. In the centre of the city and of the Ludwigsplatz stands the University. It is one of the most ancient establishments of the kind in Europe, having been founded by Count Ruprecht I. in 1386. It has a library of 200,000 volumes, and its museums and laboratories attract to it annually more than a thousand students from all parts of the world, who wear differently coloured costumes according to the category in which they are placed. They are subject to strict discipline during the

day, but are allowed perfect liberty after the lessons and lectures of the day are over, and will often form processions and march about during the night singing popular and national songs.

After painfully toiling up a steep ascent I reached an elevated spot affording a view of the whole country round. A colossal pile of ruins crowns the eminence : it is the castle of Heidelberg, formerly the residence of the Electors-Palatine. It was once a magnificent structure, each of its tenants out-rivalling his predecessors in adding to its splendour ; but the Thirty Years' War, the military genius of Louvois, Turenne, and Mélas, fires, and lightning strokes, have combined to reduce it to its present forlorn condition. Its battered and crumbling walls, and the remains of its columns and statues, are covered with wild vines, ivy, and other climbing plants ; limes and cypress trees have grown up within its walls, and raise their heads above the broken archways, and masses of evergreen fall over the gable-ends like



HEIDELBERG.



RENT TOWER.



ROUND TOWER.

gigantic weeping willows,—the whole forming an extensive aërial garden planted with flowers and shrubs up to the very clouds. It is the most wonderful sight of the kind in all Europe, after the Coliseum ; it thrilled and enchanted me, and the darkness of the evening still found me gazing upon it.

The hill on which the castle stands is called Jettebuhl. Hertha, the goddess of the Teutons, first had her most famous temple there, the priestess of which was Jetta, who rendered its oracles into mystic verse. Having resolved to break her vow of chastity and marry a German warrior, Jetta appointed to meet him near the sacred fountain, where every day gifts were offered to the goddess, and Hertha, offended at this, let loose a wolf, which devoured her.

No stranger should leave Heidelberg without seeing its famous wine-vats, the most curious and wonderful in the world. They are guarded and shown as relics in the castle vaults, and are as bulky as hulls of ships, one of them being able to contain

nearly four hundred thousand bottles of liquor.

After having seen the most remarkable things in Heidelberg, I went on to Mannheim next day. It is the capital of the Lower Palatinate, situated at the confluence of the Neckar and the Rhine. According to Ammianus Marcellinus, this town owes its origin to the Emperor Valentinian, who built a fortress on the spot to defend the entrance into his territory. On the site of the ruins of this Roman stronghold, the Count-Palatine Frederick IV. built a new citadel in 1606, and the town of Mannheim gradually sprang up around it; and its history is a consecutive series of misfortunes, sieges, pillages, and conflagrations, of which the perpetrators were now the Austrians and now the French. It is the most regularly-built but most monotonous of German cities.

My first visit was to the curé, Herr R. Koch. This gentleman had been very zealous in his efforts to alleviate the sufferings let loose upon the country by the war, and

there was not a single sick or wounded person in the town or its neighbourhood who had not been the object of his solicitude. He kept special registers of Bavarians, Prussians, Badeners, and Frenchmen, and every day he paid a visit to about a hundred French prisoners lodged in huts. He was quite equal to the work which there was to do at Mannheim, and by his advice, therefore, I directed my steps to the great hospital of Schwetzingen.

It was a two hours' ride from Mannheim to Schwetzingen, which is a little town of three thousand inhabitants, noted for its castle of Charles Theodore, the Elector, and its fairy-like gardens. The halls in this castle had been converted into sick-wards for a hundred and fifty wounded, who were well housed and comfortably treated, and a French lady watched over their welfare like a real Sister of Charity. My visit of a few hours was a cause of rejoicing to them.

Darmstadt, which was my next halting-place, is the capital of the Grand Duchy of

Hesse, and here there were four thousand French prisoners. Messrs. At and Dufor, from Toulouse, had the spiritual charge of these men, and performed their work with zeal and discretion.

I next came to Mayence, one of the most ancient cities in Europe. According to German chronicles it owes its origin to the Prince of Magicians, who was called Nequam the Infamous, and who, driven away from Treves, came and settled on this spot on the left bank of the Rhine, where that river is joined by the Main. As a proof of this the old indigenous proverb is quoted, "*Moguntia ab antiquo nequam.*" Mayence has always held a great place in the history of Germany, and the last century has seen it occupied in turn by Austrians and French. In 1792 an army of French soldiers called "*Les Mayençais,*" led by Custine, passed a whole year there.

In 1793, the allied armies of Prussia and Austria blockaded the place, and the siege is a memorable one. M. Thiers in writing of

it says : " A cat was valued at six francs, and the flesh of a dead horse fetched forty-five sous the pound. The officers fared no better than their men. At a dinner given by Aubert Dubayet, to his staff, a cat flanked by a dozen mice was served up as a rare delicacy. The greatest misfortune which the garrison had to suffer, however, was that they were absolutely deprived of all news from without. All the communications had been cut, and the place was so closely invested that for three months they had been in ignorance of what was passing in France. The Prussians, who had practised all kinds of ruses to reduce the garrison, then had some counterfeit copies of the *Moniteur* printed at Frankfort, in which it was recorded that Dumouriez had upset the Convention and that Louis XVII. was reigning with a regency. The Prussian soldiers stationed at the outposts delivered these false *Moniteurs* to the French sentinels, and the news they contained spread doubt and uneasiness among the besieged. The heads of the army and

the principal inhabitants of Mayence then met to consider their position. They came to the conclusion that it was better not to push things to an extremity; that if they held out another week they might lose all, and be obliged to yield up the garrison as prisoners; that if, on the other hand, they were to capitulate at once they would obtain leave to march out with the honours of war, and thus preserve to the country twenty thousand men who had become the bravest soldiers in the world under the leadership of Kléber and Dubayet. It was decided, therefore, to deliver up the town."

The evacuation took place on the 25th July. At a century's distance we might think we were reading the history of the siege of Metz in 1870! The same trials and the same bravery on the part of the French: the same tricks and ruses on the part of the Prussians. Bismarck did for the army of the Rhine, shut up in Metz, what the King of Prussia in 1793 did for the army besieged in Mayence. French journals were handed

to our soldiers or officers at the outposts, containing news of the most visionary character—the reign of terror that was prevailing in France, insurrection in our large towns, restoration of the Empire, entry of the Germans into Paris in the month of September 1870, etc., etc. These lying journals, printed expressly in Prussia, demoralised the defence of Metz, already at its last extremity.

At nightfall, and during the bitterest weather, I knocked at the door of a Canon of Mayence with a letter of introduction in my pocket. In spite of the piercing cold which paralysed my limbs, and of the sharp, icy wind which was cutting my face, the door-keeper kept me a long time waiting. It reminded me of that old Roman legend that Cardinal Mathieu loved to relate to the canons of his cathedral. It was this:—

“Do you know why the wind always blows so strongly at the door of your chapter-house? One day the Evil One came, arm-in-arm with the Wind, and walked about the

streets of Besançon. When they arrived at the threshold of your chapter-house, he said to the Wind: 'Brother, wait for me a moment here, I have some business to transact inside.' The Wind waited, and waited, but Satan never came out again; and the Wind is ever waiting, howling and storming, at the venerable canons' door."

This malign reminiscence enlivened to some extent the mortal suspense inflicted upon me at the door of the reverend father. At last I was permitted to pass over the sill, and the Canon eagerly questioned me as to the state of the public mind in France, the fate of our armies, and so on. He revealed his opinion, as he spoke, that this war was a necessary one, for the abatement of French national pride and the establishment of German unity.

"And doubtless, also," I said, "to establish Italian unity."

"Oh, no! for we are persuaded that Prussia will soon receive the Divine mission of restoring the Pope to Rome. The Holy Empire

must be re-established, too, for the sake of the peace of Europe, and it will be accomplished in the person of His Most Gracious Majesty King William. He alone will vanquish the Revolution and save society, which is in peril."

"Amen, Mr. Canon," I replied. "But you forget that His Most Gracious Majesty is the son of renegades, sworn enemy of the Catholic religion, and declared adversary of the Pope. I have just come from Carlsruhe, where I saw his daughter praying for the confusion of the Roman pontiff. It is not a Constantine that will be raised up with your Holy Empire, but it will furnish you with another Julian the Apostate or another Diocletian."

"No, sir ; our King William will be converted like Constantine ; he will receive from Pius IX. the crown and orb of the West, and he will become, after his victories, the prince of peace."

"My dear brother," I continued, "I fear these victories as much for you, your priests,

your bishops, and your monks, as I do for my own country. William will be a new persecutor in the history of the Church."

This reverend gentleman of Mayence soon had good occasion to shake off his optimist illusions when, after the war was over, the Kulturkampf opened the doors of German prisons to the Catholic pastors, and closed the doors of all their convents. Decidedly, the Evil One had stopped at the chapter-house of Mayence as well!

My next visit in this town was to the Prince of Holstein, the military governor. He received me with a dignity worthy of his high birth and exalted position, and, on my presentation of the credentials which had secured for me admittance into the other depôts, he gave me his authority to pursue my peaceful calling with the same readiness shown by Monseigneur Ketteler, the illustrious Bishop of Mayence.

Heavy trains of prisoners were arriving daily, and their number soon reached the enormous figure of twenty-seven thousand.

Every suitable place for locating them in the town and the suburbs was gorged with them. "We don't even know where to lodge our own German troops, freshly raised to be sent to the front," said the General to me; "you must not, therefore, be surprised at your men being so badly accommodated." It was, in fact, a whole army of prisoners for which Mayence was unexpectedly called upon to provide, and among them were thousands of sick and wounded, requiring medical attention and nursing. Under such circumstances as these, our unfortunate men were worse treated at Mayence than at any other dépôt in Germany. The inhabitants, who had remained French so long, did everything they could to alleviate their sufferings, and so did the military authorities; but, nevertheless, it must be said that, notwithstanding their united efforts, the state of the camp and of the lazarettos was bad in the extreme.

Prince Charles's Hospital was filled from basement to roof with six hundred Frenchmen. At Schönbornerhof there were four

hundred more. At the Münster barracks, turned into a hospital, there were another four hundred. At the gates of the city I passed a whole day in a frightful depôt of small-pox patients, whom death was mowing down by hundreds. A Jesuit had been attending to these, but he caught the contagion and died; a Belgian who replaced him was at the point of death; and Father Kaiser, on whom the succession had now fallen, and who conducted me through the place, was risking his life in passing from bed to bed.

It was impossible to receive all the sick men in the lazarettos, already over-full as they were, so they had to lie in the camp upon the filthy straw like unclean animals, and very often on the bare ground. There was no other place whatever to take them to. Some rough open huts, with plank roofs, were hastily constructed, but they were scarcely ready when a new batch of prisoners arrived and took possession. There was no help for it: about a thousand men had to be

left to the mercy of the epidemic, and they died under the eyes of their comrades who had escaped it! They had to die without medical aid, without medicine, without beds, and without clothing, like so many mangy dogs! It is horrible to record it, and it was a revolting sight to see.

From Mayence I went to Frankfort-on-the-Main. It is one of the most important of German cities, dating from the time of Charlemagne. In the course of his campaign of extermination against the Saxons encamped at Saxenhausen, this Emperor discovered a ford across the Main, crossed by it, and cut the Saxons to pieces, and in memory of this exploit he named the place Franconofurt, *i.e.*, Ford of the Franks. It has been by turns an imperial residence, a free and Hanseatic town, an opulent centre of commerce, and has passed through many vicissitudes, and at last it gave its name to the treaty of 1871, which marks the triumph of Prussia and the defeat of France.

A great number of officers, with a few

sick, were interned at Frankfort when I reached there. They belonged, generally speaking, to the different corps of troops defending Paris, and were made prisoners in the daily combats which occurred outside the capital. There was a Catholic curé in charge here, and no further assistance was required.

Coblentz comes next, with its magnificent cathedral, just at the spot where the Moselle joins the Rhine, which surrounds and defends it even better than its numerous and powerful forts. All the Latin authors since Suetonius call it *Confluentes*, which has become corrupted in modern times to Coblentz. This town owes its importance to the Electors of Treves, who ruled there. In 1792 its royal castle was given as a residence to Louis XVIII.

I found the French prisoners here as badly placed as at Mayence, if not worse. Dr. Görgens, the chaplain, who enjoyed the favour of the military authorities, had organised a very effective service for their

spiritual wants. Two camps were formed under the guns of the forts; one of them contained ten thousand Frenchmen, and the other eight thousand, with every possibility of the numbers being doubled.

The principal fort at Coblenz, called Ehrenbreitstein, is built on the summit of a stupendous rock, four hundred and sixty-eight feet high, overlooking the Rhine, and opposite the town. It is one of the most formidable-looking places in Europe, and from its walls and casemates four hundred guns were kept pointed at our poor unarmed prisoners, besides the squadrons of Prussians watching and moving round them, and always on the alert.

There were about fifteen hundred sick in the lazarettos, of whose deplorable condition I have still the bitterest recollection. I wish to be impartial, however, and will therefore quote here the testimony of Mr. Archer Burton in a letter to the *Times* of the 15th November:—

“ I do not think I run any risk in stating

that the prisoners taken during the early part of the war up to the capitulation of Sedan are in about the same physical condition that the English soldiers were during the first part of the Crimean war. But I cannot say the same respecting the unhappy men who fell into the hands of the Germans by the capitulation of Metz. Their condition is indescribable. The total number of prisoners is estimated at 330,000, of which 30,000 have been assigned to Coblentz. Many of them are in a state of inanition, so weak as not to be able to stretch out a hand to take their food. Dysentery and typhus are decimating them. I am assured by a humane and experienced medical man, who has just paid a visit to the Osterstein barracks, into which two thousand men are crowded, that, having noticed a movement under a heap of straw, he turned it over and found three men beneath it in the agony of death. A few paces further on four corpses were lying on the ground. He adds that forty more deaths are expected, and that the state of the

majority of these men is to the last degree deplorable. . . . It is a Herculean task. This sudden irruption of starving, naked, and dying wretches is well calculated to turn the heads of the coolest."

The city of Cologne, which I visited after Coblenz, is a very pretty sight when seen at a distance, from the banks of the Rhine or the adjacent hills; with its ramparts, steeples, towers, public buildings, and large houses, it takes the shape of an immense crescent; but when the visitor is once within its walls, he finds it tortuous, ugly, and dirty. In 1794, when it was in the occupation of the French, it contained three hundred churches, and was called "the holy," on account of its innumerable relics. Its legendary cathedral, the most handsome of any beyond the Rhine, is a worthy object of pious admiration.

Twenty thousand prisoners were penned up in the camp at Cologne, which was under the command of the Prussian Colonel Schalk, and fifteen hundred sick were distributed

among the various hospitals in the city. The Archbishop had placed them under the spiritual care of the army chaplain and a few devoted monks. My excellent friend from Saint Sulpice, the Abbé Debras, and a priest from Nancy, also lent their zealous and energetic assistance.

General von Frankenberg, the Governor of Cologne, had taken the most minute precautions with respect to our prisoners. He was the author, too, of a curious code of regulations, which he posted up in all the miserable huts, and which were soon adopted at all the other German dépôts. I consider the text is worth preserving in these pages ; it ran as follows :—

CONDUCT TO BE OBSERVED BY THE FRENCH TOWARDS
THE PRUSSAINS.

1. Every French prisoner must acquaint himself with the number of the company and of the battalion to which he belongs, as also with the name of the officers directly over him.

2. The French form companies under the orders of Prussian subalterns acting as commanders. Three other

Prussian subalterns fill the positions of sergeant-major and quarter-master. Three companies make a battalion commanded by an officer. Three battalions make a regiment under the orders of a captain.

3. Not only have the French to submit to the Prussians placed over them, but they must also obey their own superior officers for all indoors duty.

4. The French must also be obedient to the gendarmes when wearing their badge of office.

5. Every Prussian soldier is superior to every French soldier, whatever his rank.

6. Sentinels are authorised to make use of their weapons at the slightest breach of obedience.

7. Every case of disobeying orders will be punished according to the Prussian code. In serious cases, and for repeated offences, the culprit will be put to death without mercy.

8. The death penalty will be exacted in every case of assault upon any superior whatever.

9. The French must salute every Prussian officer and subaltern, and when they address these officers they must stand erect, uncover, take the pipe from their lips, and remain in a motionless attitude.

10. Every Frenchman must sleep in his tent, and not quit the lines without permission. All letters will pass through the hands of the officer commanding the company. No letter shall be received through any other medium. No newspapers will be allowed after the 27th December.

11. Every Frenchman shall wear a square of white

canvas on his shoulders, on which shall be inscribed his name and the number of his company.

12. The General exacts the severest discipline. It depends entirely upon the French themselves whether their lot is mitigated, or whether the most rigorous measures are put in force against them.

As at Mayence and Coblentz, the general misery at Cologne was frightful to contemplate ; the victuals were nauseous, and the epidemic was at its height. The relief and consolation we were able to render in the hospitals were only like a drop in the ocean ! In the suburbs of the city a number of dépôts had been established to receive the ever-increasing flood of prisoners ; 4,000 were at Wahner-Heid, 2,000 at Deutz, 3,000 at Kalk, and 8,000 in the camp at Gremberg, where the Abbé Deblay was using his best endeavours.

The next place to which I directed my steps was Aix-la-Chapelle, situated in a broad and fertile plain surrounded by the most delightful belt of wooded hills. The souvenirs of France were more lively here than

at Cologne, and the inhabitants showed greater sympathy for our unfortunate captives. Our sick and wounded were, in fact, as well treated here as at Carlsruhe, many of the townspeople taking great interest in them. Being of French origin, speaking our language, being of the same stamp, and having our manners and customs, they seemed proud to show them all off. Some of them, however, allowed their French sympathies to become too manifest, and these were placed in *durance vile* by order of the Iron Chancellor, and out of revenge for this severe measure a few wags of the place tied a placard under the tail of a dog and sent the animal to wander about the streets. The placard bore this inscription:—

“Ich armer Hund,
Ich lauf mich rund,
Und trage Bismarck
An meinem Kund.”

“I, poor dog,
Have to run about
Carrying Bismarck
Under my tail.”

It caused quite a sensation in the city ; the authorities bestirred themselves, and policemen, both mounted and on foot, chased the unhappy quadruped until they got him into a corner, when he was seized and taken to the lock-up ; and next day the police had the simplicity to advertise that if its owner would apply in person he could have the dog back ! Needless to say that the poor brute remained in prison to the end of his days !

I passed on to Wiesbaden, one of the prettiest towns on the face of the globe. A great number of French officers were here on *parole*, Marshal MacMahon at the head of them, slowly recovering from the result of his exertions at Fröschwiller and the wound he received at Sedan. His lady was also there with him, and was brave and active in her endeavours to alleviate the sufferings of our soldiers, and in sending relief to all the depôts on the borders of the Rhine from Mayence to Wesel.

From Wiesbaden I came to Düsseldorf,



MARSHAL MACMAHON.

capital of the Duchy of Berg, on the eastern bank of the Rhine. Its fifty thousand inhabitants, its magnificent streets and shops, its palaces, its hotels, mansions, and gardens, make it a place of the first importance. Napoleon I. called it his "little Paris." There were not many soldiers at Düsseldorf, but a good many officers, and these gentlemen had organised a powerful relief committee for the assistance of the captives, which extended its benefits to the whole of Germany. If this excellent example had been followed everywhere our soldiers would have been spared much of their misery. Before they returned to France they caused a monument to be erected on the spot where lay the bodies of ninety Frenchmen who died in the hospitals of the town. The president of this committee, Commander Corbin, having written on the subject in 1872 to the Mayor of Düsseldorf, received from that functionary an assurance that the town would always consider it a duty to look after and preserve the monument erected to the

memory of the soldiers who died for their country.

Neuss, a town of ten thousand inhabitants, had been pointed out to me as deprived of all religious help. On my arrival there, and after having secured a lodging at the hotel of the Drei Könige (Three Kings), I started on a visit to the commandant of the town, a Prussian major named Hantz, being anxious to obtain, at least for our sick men, the consolations of religion. I was kept waiting a long time by the sentinels posted at his door, but at last a subaltern came and said, "The Commandant receives no visitors."

I replied that I had a grave mission to fulfil, and begged that I might have an audience. A few minutes later he returned, bringing my card back with him and this message: "The Commandant orders you to quit the place at once if you do not wish to be arrested this evening."

Before leaving Neuss, however, I determined to write a letter of explanation to the cruel Prussian major, and an hour later I

received the following civil and polite reply :—

“I have the honour to inform you that there are in Neuss fifty French officers and as many soldiers, who are not in want of anything whatever. Therefore I think it will be easy for them to nurse their own sick, and you would do well to leave the place this very day.

“ HANTZ,

“ Major commanding at Neuss.”

I accordingly went on to Wesel, the Rhenish-Prussian fort of the first class which is closest to the Dutch frontier. It is situated at the confluence of the Lippe and the Rhine, and its formidable fortifications extend across from the bank of one river to that of the other. It is the dullest place on the whole German territory. Its population, numbering fifteen thousand, was tripled in 1871 by the arrival of thirty thousand captives, stowed away in its case-mates or penned up in its abominable camp. There were fifteen hundred sick when I arrived there, of which number some hundred died.

In the severe weather of 1870 our men interned at Wesel had to sleep on the bare ground under tents not proof against the piercing wind. The Marquis de Compiègne, in his narrative *From Sedan to Wesel*,* has given some interesting particulars of the camp at the latter place. "Under the guns of the fort," he says, "rows of tents extended as far as the eye could see, each tent capable of containing twenty men. There were twelve companies of four hundred men. Brilliant-coloured flags were placed over the officers' tents, and on several others, which were blackened with smoke, were fixed the signs of the artisans who occupied them. An enormous pair of shears was the sign of a barber, a pair of huge boots that of a shoemaker, and a coat was the sign of a tailor. One profound politician had sketched upon his tent gigantic profiles of the members of the Provisional Government, among whom Rochefort and Glais-Bizoin were conspicuous.

* *Correspondent*, April 1876.

At the end of the camp, huts or canteens had been built, containing all the articles which the prisoners might require, and on the left of the camp were some wooden huts forming the soup-kitchen. Immense cauldrons were fixed here, each one containing soup for six hundred men. There were also several smaller fires, at some of which the herrings were cooked which were allowed to the men as a treat once a week ; and at others tripe was prepared from the entrails of the cattle killed in the slaughter-houses. There were also tents where gaming was carried on, loto being the favourite game. There was no work done on Sunday, and then the camp was a very animated scene ; the canteens were crowded, and the walks were full of promenaders. Herr Pastour, the chaplain, said mass in the camp, and all the officers on duty, although for the most part Protestants, attended in full uniform, and behaved, to their honour be it said, most respectfully."

Minden, on the Weser, is the second town

of Westphalia, and has passed through many vicissitudes. Razed to the ground by Frederick II. at the end of the Seven Years' War, and burnt in turn by Imperialists, French, and Hanoverians, it was to have been ceded to the Duke of Mecklenburg by the Treaty of Westphalia, in compensation for Wismar, which he abandoned to the Swedes, but the Elector of Brandenburg seized upon it in the midst of the negotiations. Napoleon I. reunited it for a short time to the Kingdom of Westphalia, and since 1814 it has been an integral part of Prussia. Fifteen thousand French prisoners were interned in the camp at Minden. It was visited by a brave friend of mine—the Abbé Brisset, now curé of St. Augustine in Paris, and writing to me of this visit he said : " You remember the camp at Magdeburg ? It was well kept compared with that at Minden, the latter being knee-deep in mud. Our poor soldiers, without boots or clothing, are dying in large numbers ; seventy-three of them entered the hospital in one day. When we left this

slough of mire yesterday we were in a filthy state from head to foot."

M. Brisset had come from Belgium into the heart of Prussia, with two members of the Champs-Élysées field-hospital, in order to organise a relief service under the patronage of Brussels notables, and at the instigation of the Rev. Father Perraud, now Bishop of Autun. When they arrived at Minden, with the sanction of the Minister of War at Berlin, these gentlemen called upon General Spiegler, who was in command of the place, and looked forward to a favourable reception. M. Brisset first asked this important functionary whether he might be allowed to explain in French the object of his visit. But his Excellency, stamping his foot furiously, replied,—

"I must tell you that I don't like Frenchmen, and that I detest speaking their language or receiving visits from them."

"We are not come to pay you a visit; we are here to perform a duty, with the express sanction of the Minister."

"Yes, yes! I know that you get more liberty granted you from headquarters than you ought to have," continued the General. "I can tell you that if it only depended upon myself I would drive you out of the place instantly, both you and all the Frenchmen who came here. I will give you no information whatever, and none of my men shall move a peg for you."

His visitors had already turned their backs upon the irascible warrior, and putting on their hats were passing out without saluting him. This further incensed the General, who exclaimed,—

"If you come to headquarters again and remain covered in my presence, I'll have you thrown into the street."

Under such an officer as this, our soldiers had a terrible time of it at Minden. The Abbé J. H. Galho, sent by the Bishop of Berlin, obtained a better reception, and was permitted to visit and minister to the spiritual wants of our poor fellows. Father Schreiber and the two Catholic vicars of Minden



PRINCE BISMARCK.



were also assiduous in their attention, and eventually contracted the deadly typhus which was raging among the prisoners.

I went on to Hanover, capital of the kingdom of that name, absorbed by Prussia in 1866. Captives were scarce in these regions. Bismarck was prudent as a serpent, for it would have been dangerous to intern his enemies here. His predecessor, Hardenberg, had always had in his mind the absorption of Hanover, and had prepared the way for it. Bismarck succeeded in bringing it about. The last King of Hanover, George V., blind and aged, in vain stood up, sword in hand and rage in his heart, to defend his country against the Prussian invasion. He was cousin and personal friend of King William of Prussia, and had besides his formal assurance that he would respect the independence and autonomy of Hanover. But, vanquished, despoiled, and exiled, George V. dragged out the remainder of his existence in misery, continually repeating this bitter sentence :

“Never place faith in the word of a King of Prussia.”

Bismarck not only confiscated his estates, but the whole of his personal fortune, and with this he formed what is called the Guelph Fund. The interest accruing from the sequestered property of George V. amounts to two million marks, and this money has been used to defend Prussia against the enterprises of agents of the ex-royal family. Bismarck, however, succeeded in gaining over the leaders of the party, by allowing them annual pensions of several thousand thalers. This unworthy act of confiscation has brought about sixty millions of marks into the Prussian treasury, and reduced to nought the hopes of the faithful Hanoverians.

The problems of the future to be solved by the new German Empire are: Alsace-Lorraine with France, Holstein with Denmark, Poland and Hanover with the Germanic Confederation. Who will give us a Richelieu to hasten their solution?

Near the Dutch frontier, in the little towns echeloned along the banks of the Ems, from Osnabrück up to Emden on the shores of the North Sea, several depôts of prisoners had been formed ; at Telgte, for instance, there were a thousand, at Lingen three thousand, at Kellerberg two thousand, at Papenburg two thousand, at Meppen one thousand, at Leer two thousand, at Emden one thousand, and so on. In the centre of this region, veiled in fogs and mists, the Rev. Father Neu, a Ligurian, had settled himself, and from thence he visited in turns all the neighbouring depôts. Sometimes he even extended his journeys as far as Oldenburg and Bremen.

Oldenburg, capital of the Grand Duchy of that name, is a city of twelve thousand inhabitants, provided with fortifications and a moat filled from the River Hunte. The ducal castle is about the only feature of interest there. The reigning ducal family is as ancient as the royal family of France. Duke Walbert, son of Witikind, having

taken Oltburg, daughter of the Count of Bremen, to wife, built this castle and town, and called it after his wife's name, Oltenburg. The reigning families of Denmark and Sweden and Norway are offshoots from that illustrious stem. At Oldenburg there were two thousand prisoners, under the voluntary care of a Dominican friar, Father Eveillé-Lagrange, who was beloved and respected by all.

From here I went on to Bremen, one of the free cities of the Germanic Confederation, and capital of the duchy of that name. It is one of the finest and most wealthy towns of Northern Europe, in which German art and Dutch taste have united to erect magnificent public buildings, palaces, and mansions. Its cathedral, its town-hall, its bourse, its museum, and its broad bridges, joining the two towns separated by the Weser, are constructions worthy of the greatest capitals.

It will already have been seen that I had a special reason for visiting this place. A

letter from General Henry, sent from Metz to the Minister of War at Carlsruhe, had apprised me of the internment of my brother, sub-lieutenant in the 1st Engineers, first at Cologne and afterwards at Bremen. I found him, and the meeting was a joyous one. How sad and cast down they all were, these proud officers transported to the icy North, two hundred leagues from home, powerless and disarmed! And how many bitter hours were passed in narrating their misfortunes!

There were veteran officers from the Crimea and Italy among them, who could not answer my questions without sobbing and tearing their hair. The surrender of Metz, what a scandalous act! The finest army in the world given up without firing a shot! Thousands of soldiers dragged along pell-mell, wading through slush and mire, disarmed by their own leaders in face of the enemy, and doomed to shame and death! Heaven had good reason to shower down torrents of rain on the day of capitulation, to accompany

the floods of tears shed by all these brave fellows !

The officers of the 1st Engineers imprisoned at Bremen formed a little family apart, and they gave me a fraternal welcome. In the depth of their humiliation they were consoled somewhat by the story of their flag, one of the small number which had not been given up to the enemy. The flag is a thing of great significance, and the favoured one entrusted with its care considers that no fate is more enviable than to die in its defence rather than surrender it to the enemy. At Metz it was my brother on whom the duty fell of carrying the flag of the 1st Engineers.

On the evening of the 27th October, Colonel Merlin, who was in command of the regiment, acquainted his officers with Marshal Bazaine's orders that the flags were to be delivered up next morning. In his case it was an easy task, for he already had his regimental flag in his own house. A number of officers, however, resolved to

possess themselves of it, and while the Colonel was absent Lieutenant Chabal effected an entrance into the house, buried the eagle in the garden, and brought away the tri-coloured standard. On his return the Colonel sent his Adjutant-Major to fetch Lieutenant Guers, who was responsible for the flag, and the latter came up immediately.

"My friend," said the Colonel, "you have the flag, eh?"

"No, Colonel."

"But you know where it is?"

"Yes, Colonel."

"Tell me where it is."

"Never, Colonel."

"If it is not given up, the Prussian General von Kummer will bring you before a court-martial."

"Von Kummer will never make me either betray a comrade or give up the flag, which I have not in my possession."

Von Kummer had to content himself next day with the dishonoured eagle, which

some of the Colonel's men had found buried in the garden, and the flag, kept hidden, at first, by the family of a captain in Metz, was subsequently sent to its rescuer, Lieutenant Chabal, in Algeria. Some time later, Colonel Salanson having replaced Colonel Merlin, the precious relic was handed to him to be placed in the *salle d'honneur* of the regiment.

I found a thousand French soldiers interned in the barracks at Bremen, the pale Parisian rubbing elbows with the bronzed Arab, and in the town were a hundred officers on parole. Colonel Brüggeman had charge of the prisoners, and General von Alvensleben, who had supreme command, was desirous that they should be well looked after and kindly treated. When our officers first arrived in the town he quartered them for a whole day in the best hotels, and when compared with the other dépôts the lot of our captives here was really to be envied. Colonel Brüggeman was very obliging to the French officers, but he had to call the

roll once a week, and the better to dissemble and soften their captivity he would send them tickets for the theatre or letters of invitation. He only spoke German, so he was compelled to employ an interpreter, the Rev. Mr. Schwalb, and the latter gave Bible readings every Sunday in the barracks, and arranged with the Catholic curé of Bremen for the holding of Divine service. Still there were reasons existing for ill-feeling. General von Alvensleben's son was killed outside of Metz, and the son of Colonel Brüggeman had just been wounded at Neuville near Orleans.

Both the General and the Colonel accorded me the greatest freedom in visiting the barracks and hospitals. Herr Stephan Fiedeldey, the curé of Bremen, several times assembled the greater portion of the captives in his church, and often accompanied me to the various dépôts to distribute relief.

Monseigneur Mermillod was kind enough to take especial interest in Bremen, and sent to my brother large quantities of useful

articles, which greatly added to the comfort of numbers of men sorely tried by the severe winter passed on the shores of the icy northern sea. Our profoundest gratitude is due to the brave Bishop of Geneva.



CHAPTER VII.

Napoleon III. at Wilhelmshöhe—Bazaine at Cassel—
General Meusnier—General Castelnau—Interview
with the Emperor—Napoleon III.'s Farewell—His
Life at the Castle of the Electors of Hesse—Who
is responsible?

IN the centre of Germany stands Cassel, capital of Electoral Hesse, of which the neighbouring castle of Wilhelmshöhe is the miniature Versailles. Under the first Napoleon this province formed the kernel of the Kingdom of Westphalia, whose crown for a short period encircled the brows of Jerome Bonaparte. In December 1870 it was the second St. Helena of the Imperial dynasty of France.

The geographer Monconis, writing in the seventeenth century, gives a sufficiently melancholy description of this place. He

says : " It is situated at the foot of a hill which is almost level ground in comparison with the rest of the country. The houses are built either of wood or mud, with very low-pitched rooms, and the beds are very small, having a bag of feathers for their only covering. The Landgrave's castle or palace is built in the centre of an immense mound of earth, and is a huge stone building overlooking the valley and the river Fulda. A pretty footbridge leads over the river, and beyond this is a portion of the town. Its fortifications are excellent, though not very regular ; its bastions are high, and flanked with smaller ones, all of them being arched and surrounded by broad ditches. Inside the castle there is a very fine riding-school, uncovered to the sky, and built in the shape of a Roman head-piece. The arsenal is a vast detached building, containing arms for 25,000 soldiers, and a large number of cannons taken from the Emperor and the Spaniards. There is a very nice weighing-machine for weighing the cannon, which

can be worked by a child by means of an endless screw."

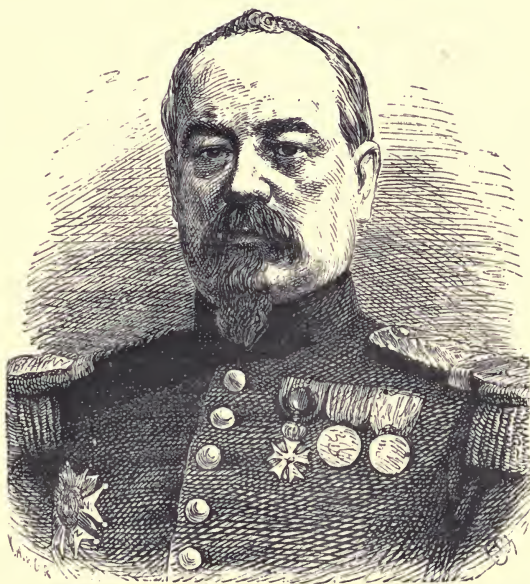
The revocation of the Edict of Nantes was for Cassel a turning-point towards progress and fortune. Protestants who were driven from France met with a gracious welcome here, and great numbers settled in the town and neighbourhood. They built a new town on the neighbouring heights, the houses being all of the same elevation and constructed in a gay style of architecture. They gave it the name of their own regretted country, and this quarter of Cassel is to this day called *Französische Neustadt*.* Cassel has splendid streets, spacious squares in which statues are erected, broad avenues, and magnificent public buildings, and all this, with its beautiful walks by the Fulda, constitutes it now one of the prettiest towns of central Europe.

After the victories of Sedan and Metz, the strategical position of Cassel in the very

* New French-Town.

heart of Germany naturally pointed it out to the Prussian Government as a suitable place for the internment of Napoleon III., his staff, and the high officials of the French army. When I visited for the first time the three hundred French sick who were being nursed at Cassel, I found myself, on the 11th November, at the Hôtel du Nord, in the presence of Bazaine, Lebœuf, Ladmirault, Douay, Frossard, and a crowd of other general officers. Their stay was, however, very short. It was a matter of importance to Prussia to scatter the heads of the French army as soon as possible, so as to avoid any complication, and even the faintest shadow of a complot in the vicinity of Napoleon III. Herr von Bismarck had a sharp eye upon Cassel, and precautionary measures were taken without delay.

Bazaine, who was soon joined by his young wife, was allowed to remain near his master, as an exceptional favour, and every time I met him, whether at the Hôtel du Nord, where we were lodged under the same



MARSHAL BAZAINE.

roof, or on the public promenades, I was greatly moved at the sight of so much greatness and so much wretchedness.

Never, in the history of France, has the Tarpeian rock been so near the Capitol; never has a general fallen so rapidly from the summit of glory into the abyss of dishonour. "Previous to the 27th October, 1870," says M. Bouchet, "every Frenchman extolled the heroic Bazaine to the skies. After the fatal capitulation of Metz no Frenchman pronounced his name without execration and disgust." Might Bazaine have avoided capitulating? All military writers who have said anything about the siege of Metz have not hesitated to reply that if the Marshal had sincerely wished to extricate himself he might have done it at any time up to the beginning of October, and that there would not have been any insuperable difficulties in the way. The correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* expressed the same opinion several times. "The extraordinary conduct of Bazaine

throughout the negotiations at Metz," says this writer, "remains unexplained. I believe I can safely state that every one who has followed the course of this siege step by step, to see, at last, this magnificent army walk out as prisoners, can have but one opinion. The army which surrendered at Metz was numerically stronger than the Prussian army effecting the blockade. It is quite beside the question to pretend that it was rendered unfit for service by sickness and famine, for the answer might be made, 'Why had it been exposed to these evils?' If an equal number of Prussian or British troops had been placed in a similar position, there is no doubt whatever that they would have cut their way out. They would have suffered some losses, it is true, but they would certainly have succeeded in escaping. The settled opinion of all those who have seriously examined the question is, that the finest army in the world was sacrificed to the intrigues and cupidity of a soldier of fortune."

During the fifteen years that Bazaine was

an exile in Spain, from his trial at the Trianon till his death at Madrid, he made several vain attempts to justify his conduct at Metz, but the motives he alleged to disculpate himself only deepened the stain of his crime. Dynastic aims and personal views and jealous rivalries ought never to be allowed to decide the fate of a nation !

Compared with that of Metz, the capitulation of Baylen, which so roused the indignation of Napoleon I. against General Dupont, was the merest accident of war. Bonaparte was at Bordeaux on the 22nd July, 1808, when he heard of the disaster at Baylen, and on receiving the news he exclaimed : " Poor Dupont ! What a fall after Albeck, Halle, Friedland ! That is the chance of war, however : a single day suffices to blight a whole career ! It is no great thing that an army should be beaten ; the scale may turn next day, and that disaster may be repaired. But that an army should make a shameful surrender is a blot on the French name and a stain upon its glory. The wounds inflicted

on a country's honour never heal up! Their moral effect is terrible. What? do you tell me that a General of mine has had the baseness to consent to the searching of our soldiers' knapsacks as if they were a pack of thieves? You say there was no other means of saving the army; very well, then, it would have been better that they had all perished with arms in their hands, and that not a single man had escaped! Their death would have been glorious, at least, and we should have taken revenge for it. We can find more soldiers, but honour once lost is never recovered!"

The sight of Bazaine at Cassel was a melancholy spectacle for any real patriot. He could scarcely have helped shuddering if he thought of the striking contrast between the conduct of the Marshal at Metz and that of General Meusnier, in 1793, in the very same place. Although scarcely thirty-nine years of age, Meusnier was then in command of a handful of Frenchmen besieged by the King of Prussia in person. He had retired

into the Königstein fort, and for a long time he kept the Prussians at bay, until, at last, the King determined to send in a message under a flag of truce to induce him to surrender. In the presence of the bearer of the message Meusnier gathered his four hundred men around him and thus addressed them : "Soldiers of liberty ! if you remain resolute, which I do not doubt for a moment, we will defend the fortress as long as there shall be one of us left alive. But if, contrary to my expectation, you should be ready to give in, this moment shall be my last !"

With that the General drew his pistol and pointed it to his temple. But the men all shouted with one voice : "We'll conquer or die with you !" Then turning towards the Prussian officer, Meusnier said : "As a reply to your message, sir, take back to your King the report of what you have seen and heard."

Meusnier was wounded in the leg by a cannon ball soon after, in a night sortie, and had to undergo amputation on the 13th June

1793. The King was filled with admiration for Meusnier's bravery, and when he heard of his wound he sent him doctors and medicines, and suspended hostilities until the day of his death. And when the news of his end reached him, the King said,—

“He has done me much harm, but France has not produced a greater man than he.”

What lessons Bazaine must have learnt at Cassel, if he had been capable of meditating upon the glorious teachings of our history !

In the great Council Chamber of the Doges at Venice portraits are exhibited of those redoubtable chiefs to whom the proud republic by turns confided its destinies. Near the centre a frame veiled by a black curtain strikes the eye immediately, and under it is this inscription : “The place of Marino Faliero, decapitated.” At Versailles, in the grand hall of the Marshals of France, in the place of the Marshal of Metz, these words ought to be written up in letters of blood under a frame veiled in black : “Traitor to his country.”

Herr Wehner, the senior curé of Cassel, is a man as much distinguished by his intelligence and learning as by his great influence in the country. As soon as these hundreds of sick Frenchmen arrived in the place, he strained every nerve to help and relieve them. The monks and the nuns from the adjacent monasteries also emulated the zeal of the pastor and his vicars, so that none of our captives died without receiving the consolations of religion. Cassel, it must be mentioned, was simply a stopping-place for those of our men whom it was impossible to send on to the distant provinces of Prussia. They had to recover and go on, or remain and die there !

Herr Wehner told me that he had conducted Divine service at Wilhelmshöhe for about three months. He started for the castle every Sunday morning at eight o'clock, where, at nine o'clock, the Imperial prisoner and all his household attended mass in an apartment fitted up as an oratory. After this, one of the few French army chaplains

came to replace him. His services, however, were soon dispensed with, and the performance of Divine service at the castle was discontinued. It was of the highest importance, he said, that a chaplain should at any rate be appointed to take up his residence at Cassel-Wilhelmshöhe, to watch over the numerous Frenchmen interned in the neighbouring towns, and especially in the principality of Waldeck, a strictly Protestant country, where there were four hundred prisoners interned without a Catholic priest among them.

The people of Cassel were much struck by this oversight. Both Protestants and Catholics were unanimous in saying: "Your Emperor has no chaplain, and your soldiers are also unprovided for in that respect; our ministers are obliged to act in the place of yours at the bedsides of the dying. Has France, then, no care whatever for the moral and spiritual welfare of her children?"

Early in the morning of the 12th December, 1870, furnished with a note of introduc-

tion to General Castelnau, aide-de-camp in attendance on Napoleon III. at Wilhelms-höhe, I made my way towards the castle. It was wet and gloomy weather, the road was deep in mud and slush, and the snow was still lying out on the country around. The giant trees of the Habichtswaldgebirge, stripped of their verdure, and their branches covered with snow and hoar-frost, looked like an immense glacier of the Alps in the distance. It is in the very centre of this region of dense forests that the Electoral residence is situate, which at this moment was transformed into a State prison.

On the summit of a hill an old feudal tower of three stories supports the statue of Hercules, which dominates and overlooks the whole country. A roaring and foaming cascade issues from the base of this tower, falling from rock to rock, and from terrace to terrace, until it reaches the foot of the hill at the entrance to the castle. The superb façade and the stately proportions of this building are an imposing sight

of themselves ; but beyond and around, half hidden in an immense forest, are lakes, pavilions, pyramids, towers, charming retreats, English gardens, pagan temples, fountains, aqueducts, bridges, and beautiful walks shaded by majestic trees. And besides all this, there is a jet of water, said to be the most powerful one in Europe, throwing a stream nearly two hundred feet in the air, and moistening the castle and grounds with a fine drizzling mist.

The Elector, William I., gave his own name to the place in 1793, and to the right of Wilhelmshöhe he built another castle, which he called Löwenburg, a perfect type of a feudal keep, hidden in the midst of the forest, and not visible at first sight amongst the trees.

Seen from a distance, Wilhelmshöhe recalls the Palais de Bourbon, in Paris. In the centre rises a huge portico ornamented with six gigantic columns, supporting a heavy cupola surmounted by a flag. Here, beneath its victorious folds, the Prus-

sian standard sheltered the Emperor Napoleon III.,—recently the arbiter of Europe, but now an object of compassion for the whole world. It was quite impossible for me to gaze upon this spectacle without a shock to the feelings, and without recognising that even by the side of Crécy, Pavia, and Waterloo, the defeat and capitulation at Sedan was the most humiliating and damaging chapter in our whole history.

At the extremity of a long and broad avenue of lime trees, I came suddenly face to face with a Prussian patrol in marching order and fully armed, and after a word of explanation the commander of the troop conducted me silently to General Castelnau's quarters. It was a modest apartment on the right, in the lobby at the foot of the grand staircase. The General gave me a friendly reception, but could not help expressing his surprise.

"Frenchmen," he said, "who reach as far as this are very few and far between. They have to obtain the authority of the

Prussian Governor, who generally refuses it. From your dress, however, the sentinels have evidently taken you for Herr Wehner, the curé, who is authorised to come at any time. I am very glad the mistake has been made, for the strictest orders have been given not to allow any visitors to pass, whatever may be their rank; but if Herr von Kerstall, the military governor of the castle, is apprised of his patrol's error, there will be a heavy punishment in store for those who let you pass."

The General conversed with me for a long time about the different dépôts of prisoners in Germany, the terrible features of the war, and several officers of the army with whom we were mutually acquainted. At last he said,—

"It is now ten o'clock. The Emperor will be in the great conservatory, where he goes every morning to read the papers and his private correspondence. Would you like to pay your respects to His Majesty?"

“ I am afraid, General,” I answered, “ that just at this time a wish of that kind would be importunate and indiscreet. The grief which such a terrible misfortune must cause ought to be respected by every one.”

“ No, no ! The Emperor would be very pleased to see you. I’ll go and tell him you are here.”

It was scarcely a year ago that I had seen Napoleon III. in Paris, surrounded by an enthusiastic crowd in the Place du Carrousel, and holding a review of the garrison. The Empress and the Prince Imperial were there too, on the central balcony of the Tuileries, surrounded by the Court, showing themselves to the Parisians, who cheered them frantically. The populace was charmed by the martial music, and fascinated by the sight of the magnificent troops ; and the Emperor, followed by a brilliant staff, passed proud and contented along their serried lines. But now ! it was painful to meet him again under such circumstances as these ; waited upon by servants

of the King of Prussia, kept in sight by his Uhlans and his dragoons, beaten, dethroned, a prisoner, cast out by France and abandoned by Europe.

There he was, outside of the castle, in a large and splendid conservatory full of shrubs and orange trees, and the General conducted me to him. He was seated, and reading a journal, of which there were several lying on some tables within his reach. He rose slowly and painfully at my approach, and, bidding me sit beside him in the kindest manner possible, he said,—

“The General tells me that you have come from Rome, passing through Italy and Germany, to bring relief to our poor army. I am glad to thank you for it, Monsieur l'Abbé, and am pleased at the opportunity of learning from your lips how it is going with our prisoners of war. What dépôts have you visited? How are our soldiers treated there? Have we many sick, and many dead?”

I replied as concisely as possible to all

these questions. Suddenly the Emperor changed the subject.

“On your way from Rome,” he said, “you travelled through Italy. Were you able to gather, as you went, the drift of public opinion?”

“Sire,” I replied, “in every town in the Peninsula through which I passed it was easy to see that the people were greatly exasperated against France, and they were loud in their sympathies with our enemies.”

“Ah! nations are like individuals, favours and benefits are heaped upon them in vain. I believed I could be sure of the lasting sympathy of Italians for France. But I have been deceived. And now permit me once more to thank you for your devotion to our captive soldiers, and for your visit to the most unfortunate of them all.”

“Sire, there is nothing in the world so worthy of admiration as misfortune borne with magnanimity.”

“Thanks, Monsieur l’Abbé, for your kind words and sentiments. Adieu! If happier

days are in store for me, I will not forget you."

The reader has seen, in the first chapter of this book, what was the hostile state of public opinion in Italy towards France and her deposed sovereign. It is true, nevertheless, that in certain spheres where personal and dynastic ties preserve their efficacy, the Imperial family preserved a constant and profound sympathy. The generation of Italians of 1859, mostly still living, cannot deny, and much less can they forget, that they owe a great deal to the Napoleons; but it must be confessed that since 1870 an outburst of fierce hatred and implacable resentment has given place, in the beautiful peninsula, to the universal admiration and gratitude they used to feel for France. As a proof of this it is only necessary to reproduce the annexed sarcastic document, distributed by hundreds of thousands in Turin, Palermo, Venice, and Naples. It will show that the account I gave to the unfortunate author of Italian independence, of the state

of public opinion in Italy towards him after 1870, was no more than the strict truth :—

“NAPOLEON III.’S FAREWELL.

“Adieu, Paris, superb capital of my ruined empire Remember that it is to the Napoleons alone that thou owedst that imperial crown with which thou enrichedst thine arms, and which defeat has taken from us !

“Adieu, dear Tuileries, seat of so many kings ! Adieu, discreet and respectful curtains of a throne, which knew so well how to hide so many royal and imperial secrets ! Adieu, valiant warriors, and above all the bayonets and cannon, whose points and whose mouths were the sole supports of my sovereignty !

“Adieu, homicidal mitrailleuses, the marvellous creations of my genius ! You were not so successful nor so formidable as I had fondly hoped and expected you would be !

“Adieu, chassépôts, thunderbolts of death at Mentana, but cold-water syringes at Wissembourg !

“Adieu, my dear MacMahon ! After the glories of Magenta, for which, and for having so well served Italy, I made you a duke, you have served me very badly at the head of the soldiers I confided to you !

“Adieu, Bazaine ! Think now how to unravel the tangled skein of my political and military errors, which I leave to you as a sad inheritance ! Like a new Icarus, seek for yourself a way out of the labyrinth with which the Prussian army has hedged you about !

“Adieu, splendid concerts and military bands

Pardon me if, at the moment of entering upon a deplorable campaign, and in order to delight republican ears, I made you play the 'Marseillaise,' this hymn changed into a superb funeral march in a minor key written expressly by the renowned Gounod !

"Adieu, Rome ! Adieu, Pius IX. ! Dear city of the Cæsars ! After having published their exploits, written by others and signed by myself, under the pretext of consolidating the Papal throne, and out of a hypocritical love for Italy which I hated in my heart (a new little Cæsar), I surrounded your antique ramparts with guns ! At the present moment, like a witness about to perjure himself, I must tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. As soon as that beloved Empress, so good to me and to others, presented me with a son, I longed (with all the respect due to the holy tiara of Rome) to give thee to this infant already secretly named by me 'King of Rome.' To announce his rule, and in order to condescend to the wishes of my brave Parisians, I went so far as to give that title to one of the handsomest streets of the capital. Later on, he would have gone himself to be crowned King of Rome ! Forgive me, my dear Italy ! Now that all these dreams have vanished into an 'Adieu' it is as well that thou shouldst know this.

"And thou, venerable old man, great Pius IX., who, as Archbishop of Imola, consentedst to furnish me, a fugitive, with coin sufficient to enable me to escape from the clutches of the Papal police who closely dogged my footsteps, forgive me if, at the commencement of this fatal war, I withdrew my troops from thy states. Fear

not, however ; they are gone, but the famous Convention of September remains. Italy will content herself with appealing to the résolvent clause of this contract, without running the risk of being condemned to pay expenses.

“Adieu, Mentana, where my rifles did such wonderful execution ! Proud of their success, I drove into my brain that nail which split my imperial forehead—that war undertaken with chassepôts of such sorry effect.

“Adieu, Mexican fiasco ! My present deplorable checkmate will silence the differences of opinion respecting thee.

“Adieu, Nice ! Adieu, Savoy ! flourishing provinces of Italy traitorously annexed to my empire. Soon, very soon, you will return by the way you came.

“Adieu, glorious victories of my old armies ! Let me forget you ! Adieu, my veterans ! You were more fortunate when you were defending the rights of others than when you were defending mine ; and when it became necessary to defend my throne and the honour of the country, your antique laurels were changed into crowns of weeds and nettles.

“Adieu, my well-beloved spouse ! Sprung from nothing, with me thou shalt return to nothing ! We have enjoyed ourselves pretty well together : it is a law of nature to retire and make room for others. I have already signed the passport to another President's seat or another monarch's crown. Hold thyself ready to welcome another queen, or empress, or president's wife. With her crinoline narrow or wide, she will go and display her long trains in those gilded halls where kings of pure blood have had their thrones.

“ Adieu, Paris, Tuileries, mitrailleuses, chassepôts, MacMahon, Bazaine, concerts, Rome, Pius IX., Mentana, Mexico, Nice, Savoy, victories, son, wife ! The dream is over ! Adieu ! ”

Italy was not only ungrateful to France and unjust towards Napoleon III., but it is a notorious fact in European history that she overwhelmed them both with her most insulting sarcasm ; and vile pamphlets, scurrilous prints and caricatures, were spread broadcast through all her towns and villages.

One of these caricatures represents Napoleon III. in the hands of the King of Prussia, the Empress in the hands of the King of Bavaria, the Prince Imperial in the clutches of the King of Wurtemberg, Prince Jerome in the firm grip of the King of Saxony, Emile Ollivier in the custody of the Grand Duke of Hesse, and M. de Gramont in the clutches of the Grand Duke of Baden. All these French personages are represented as almost void of clothing, and are writhing under the blows received from these German potentates, who, in a state of high glee, are

administering to their victims a sound flogging.

Another one represents Napoleon III. shut up in a gilded cage, comfortably reclining on a sumptuous sofa, close to a table loaded with wine and all sorts of good things. Under the form of a roaring lion trying to break through the bars of the cage, France is seen at the Emperor's side devouring the remains of animals whose bones are strewed about the floor.

These fine Italian productions were immediately imported into Germany, to be reproduced and distributed in large numbers with an eagerness worthy of the gratitude which inspired them.

The same insults and the same animosities were given expression to at Florence, Genoa, and Turin as at Munich, Baden, and Berlin. Was I wrong in the report I rendered at Wilhelmshöhe of the regrettable state of public opinion in Italy? Since 1870, the sister nation has given still more striking proofs of the sentiments she nourishes to-

wards those who shed torrents of their purest blood for her. "Righteousness exalteth a nation," saith Scripture, "but sin is a reproach to any people."

The superior officers of the armies of Sedan and Metz all came to pay their respects to Napoleon III. at Wilhelmshöhe. Mac-Mahon, however, who was detained by his wounds at Wiesbaden, was excused from coming to Cassel. Bazaine, on the contrary, hastened thither as soon as he was out of Metz, and after a few days passed at the Hôtel du Nord he took up his quarters, with his wife, in a pretty villa just outside the Imperial prison, and Napoleon often invited him to his table with other exalted personages.

These familiar dinner-parties, however, did not last long. Certain rumours got into circulation about General Ladmirault. He was accused of having made some insulting remarks about the Emperor when he was in Metz, and of having got up a plot to supplant Bazaine in the command. It was even

narrated that these rumours, which were whispered about among the Emperor's confidants, had been the cause of a duel which had cost Ladmiraute's aide-de-camp his life.

One night, in the middle of November, the Empress Eugénie, accompanied by a man of distinction (said to be M. de Lesseps) and a lady of honour, arrived at the castle of Wilhelmshöhe to see her unfortunate husband, and went away again next morning. Every three days Napoleon III. received political messages by courier from London, which were first delivered at Cassel and then taken up to the castle by General Frossard.

The Imperial prisoner was scarcely visible to any but the French officers residing at Cassel. When they were admitted to his presence, he would generally invite some of them to stay and dine with him, and the table was always well provided. In the evening amusement was found in routs or private theatricals, as used to be the case at Biarritz and St. Cloud. The Emperor went out but little when the weather was bad, but

he took a walk when the temperature was favourable. In the middle of December his favourite exercise was skating, and his love for this recreation nearly cost him his life on one occasion : he had a fall which severely bruised his forehead, and he was compelled to keep his room for eleven days afterwards. His life really appeared to be in danger at one time, and Queen Augusta sent her own physician to see him, and after that he repeated his visits once a week.

The Emperor, as, indeed, was always his wont, spoke but little, and got through his work slowly, but he did not lose all his cheerfulness ; he would chat pleasantly and familiarly with those who surrounded him, and it was an understood thing to treat the Republic as an immense joke. M. Rouher arrived on November 20th, and remained three days. The Emperor remained alone with him in the conservatory already alluded to for more than four hours ; it was stated that the object of their interview was to agree upon the terms of a memorial to be drawn

up for presentation to the Prussian Government. Before his departure for London, M. Rouher had a lengthened interview at Cassel with Herr von Thiese, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at Berlin.

Among the other notable personages who found their way to Wilhelmshöhe may be mentioned M. Piétri, who came from Geneva; M. Hubaine, who arrived *viâ* Florence; and M. Paul de Cassagnac, who was interned in the fortress of Görlitz, and came under the escort of a police officer. Rumours of attempted evasion were at that time spread about among the soldiers on guard at the castle and in the town of Cassel, and it was stated that M. de Cassagnac tried to persuade the Imperial prisoner to escape and put himself at the head of the army. However true or false these rumours may have been, it was a fact that from that time the surveillance became more strict, and, by the order of Bismarck, whenever Napoleon drove out in his carriage Herr von Kerstall followed him in another.

The ex-Emperor had a credit opened for him on a bank at Frankfort, in order to cover his expenses, but he availed himself but little of it. He drew the greater part of the funds he required from London, receiving the money half in Bank of England notes and half in French gold coin ; this money therefore circulated freely in the neighbourhood of the castle and at Cassel. Once a week a report on the state of the prisoners was sent direct to headquarters at Versailles, whence all orders respecting Wilhelmshöhe were issued. It was Herr von Bismarck himself who gave all the instructions to the Governor.

The meeting of the National Assembly, the election of M. Thiers, and the signature of the Treaty of Frankfort set the ex-Emperor at liberty. This, in the eyes of Prussia and of Europe, was equivalent to his definite deposition, and he soon after joined the Empress and Prince Imperial at Chislehurst, where he passed the remainder of his days in retirement, and in such peace

and quietness as he had never known before.

In passing an historical judgment upon the reign of Napoleon III., the question which is most discussed is, To what extent was he responsible for the frightful overthrow that terminated it? The blindness of political parties, however, the one-sidedness of passionate hatred, and the bitter recollections of a past which is still so near to us, have made it impossible, as yet, to form any clear and impartial opinion. Before pronouncing upon any public event, it is necessary to take careful account of both distant and immediate causes. Napoleon III. certainly appears to be entirely responsible for the remote causes of the ruin of France in 1870. He made Italy, he allowed Austria to be crushed at Sadowa, he aided the plans and played into the hands of Bismarck, and ratified all the spoliations of Prussia.

The words which Prince Jerome pronounced in full Senate in the Emperor's

name are still ringing in our ears: "France must be the inveterate enemy of Catholic Austria, and do everything possible for the grandeur of Protestant Prussia!" This was the policy of the Second Empire which led fatally to the ruin of France.

In his great work *Un po più di Luce*,* General La Marmora, who was better versed than any one else in the Napoleonic plots, proved to a certainty that the monstrous alliance of Italy and Prussia against France was the chief result of the reign of Napoleon III., who courted it and brought it about in spite of all the wise remonstrances of his ministers, M. Drouyn de Lhuys in particular, and in spite of the misgivings of the country.

It is clear, too, from the circulars published by the authority of Cardinal Antonelli, that at the moment when he was giving Pius IX. the most categorical assurances that he would never abandon him, the Emperor gave the Italian Government to

* "A Little More Light."

understand that he would take advantage of a vacancy in the Holy See, or any other near and unforeseen eventuality, to recall his troops from Rome; that in the meantime Italy should keep open the negotiations with the Vatican, so as to make all the blame fall upon the Holy Father; and that the French Government was unceasingly occupying itself with this question in a sense entirely favourable to the new kingdom of Italy.

From all these grave historical facts there issues one evident conclusion—that is, that Napoleon III. was the creator of Italian unity to the gain of Piedmont, as he was the creator of German unity to the gain of Prussia.

Let us, however, be just. The immediate responsibility of our disasters does not fall so crushingly upon the Emperor. It is not possible for any one who lived in 1870 and 1871 to maintain that the war against Prussia was a dynastic enterprise and not a national aspiration. A few Netsors apart—like M. Thiers, for instance—whose stern

voices found no echo in the country, *every Frenchman wished and desired war*. On the interpellation of the Opposition itself, having M. Cochery, a man above suspicion, for mouthpiece, our Chambers voted for war amid shouts and cheering; the Press welcomed it with enthusiasm; and our town and rural populations gave frantic manifestations of their approval of it. Let us hear the leaders of public opinion at the moment it was declared * :—

“If we had put up with Bismarck’s insults, there is not a lady in the world who would have accepted the arm of a Frenchman.”—H. PESSARD.

“It is easy to understand that certain insults will be followed by an outburst. It is not astonishing that the French Government should yield to the universal impulse.”—LÉON LAVEDAN.

“Let us take an energetic course. With the butts of our rifles at their backs we will force them to cross the Rhine and vacate the left bank.”—E. DE GIRARDIN.

“It is the best founded, the most legitimate, and the most indispensable war for our national security.”—ABOUT

The war was neither the work of a party nor an adventure imposed upon the country

* Quotations by J. Delafosse: *Le Matin*, May 1888.

by the sovereign. The nation entered into it with its whole heart.

Let us, according to the Gospel, render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, and unto the different sections of the French people that which belongs to them. Striking our breasts, let us say: "We were all of us either blind or culpable!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Prussian Saxony—Magdeburg—The Staff of the Army of the Rhine—Bazaine's Plans—Conspiracy at Metz—Carnot's Tomb—Halberstadt—Wittenberg—Halle—Torgau—Erfurt.

PRUSSIAN SAXONY has Magdeburg for its capital, a town of 130,000 inhabitants, and one of the most important places of the new German Empire. Its historians pretend that it was the "Mesóvium" of Ptolemy. Pomarius believed that the town derived its name from "Magada," the name under which Venus was worshipped in that country; while Bertius maintains its name is composed of the two German words "Magd-Burg" (Virgin Town), and was given to it by the Empress Edith, daughter of Edmond, King of the Anglo-Saxons, and wife of Otho I., suzerain of the town in the tenth century,

who greatly enlarged and beautified the city, and at her request the Emperor Otho built a splendid cathedral, established an archbishopric, and founded monasteries.

The town has passed through some rude experiences. In 1013, Boleslas, King of Poland, destroyed the work of Edith and Otho; in 1118, the town was burnt completely down; in 1214, Otho IV. destroyed all the suburbs and fortifications; in 1547, the Elector of Saxony laid siege to it; in 1549, Charles V. blockaded it; in 1631, the renowned Tilly carried it by assault after a two years' siege, and gave it up to pillage. This fierce warrior put all the inhabitants to the sword, beheaded its heroic defender, and had the inscription placed on his house, which the Magdeburgers can read until this day: "Remember the 10th of May, 1631."

From 1806 to 1814, the French were masters of Magdeburg, and made it the chief town of the department of the Elbe. It was in order to retain this jewel, the brightest one in the crown, that the beautiful Queen

Louise, wife of Frederick William III., and mother of the Emperor William, humbly solicited the favours of Napoleon I., at the time of the Treaty of Tilsit.

At this famous interview, before the banquet, Napoleon took a splendid rose, and respectfully offered it to the unfortunate Queen of Prussia. On accepting it she said,—

“Yes, but with Magdeburg!”

Deaf to the entreaties of the Queen, Bonaparte coolly laid waste the Prussian provinces of Brandenburg, Pomerania, Saxony, and Silesia, and when he took his leave of her, her royal indignation overflowed.

“Is it possible,” she said, “that, having had access to the Man of the Age, he does not afford me the satisfaction of being able to assure him that he has attached me to him for life?”

“Madame, I am to be pitied,” was Napoleon’s reply. “My evil star is responsible for it.”

In 1814 the French successfully defended

Magdeburg against the European coalition, and it was only the Treaty of Paris that caused them to lay down their arms. In the midst of the splendid park of Herrenkrug, about four miles out of the town, a splendid monument was raised in 1886 to commemorate this deliverance of the city from the French domination. At the top of the monument stands the colossal figure of "Germania," holding in one hand a warrior's lance, and in the other a crown of laurels. To-day Magdeburg is a populous and thriving town, and its position on the Elbe is one of great strength.

I arrived for the first time in this central dépôt of our captive army, with a convoy of two thousand men from Metz, on the 15th November, 1870. There was a great crush at the station, which was draped with Prussian flags, and an enormous crowd had assembled to see the prisoners march into the town, to the strains of exulting military music. It was a sight never to be forgotten by a Frenchman.

With eager steps and cast-down eyes I hastened through the streets to put myself into immediate communication with the authorities charged with the care of our thirty thousand prisoners. The Baron von Hanstein was the general in command of the place, and he received me with the most perfect courtesy and Christian feeling ; and in all this dreary land of exile, no other military chief appeared to be so mindful of his duty, so gentlemanly in his bearing, and so anxious for the welfare of the unfortunate captives. Nevertheless his task, when compared with that of the other Prussian commanders, was simply crushing.

It was not possible to make room for thirty thousand men and a crowd of officers, without any previous notice or preparation, in a town already filled with local troops concentrated there, without having to contend with serious difficulties. Lodgings, medicaments, doctors, provisions, beds, clothing, in fact every necessary, was lacking. But the General performed prodigies of skilful man-

agement, and worked night and day at the improvement of the depôt. The first week or two was a time of great hardships for our troops, and never did human misery appear in more hideous form than in the camp on the banks of the Elbe, where the only covering which could be afforded to our sick and dying men was a thin tent covered with frozen snow.

By the end of the month, however, General von Hanstein's energetic efforts had caused a regular city of huts to spring up at the gates of Magdeburg, in which our miserable troops found shelter, and eventually the sick ones—eaten up by burning fevers and diseases of the lungs, stretched on trusses of damp straw, and exposed to the water trickling through the chinks and unsound roofs of their huts—found pretty comfortable quarters in twenty-five field-hospitals.

The Baron von Hanstein is deserving of a worthy place in the annals of the French captives in Germany. How many French mothers have to thank him for the return of

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their sons ; and how many young Frenchmen, now of mature age, owe their lives to the paternal care which he bestowed upon them ! Let these sad pages, at least, offer the modest tribute of our eternal gratitude ! He accorded me full liberty in my movements, only exacting the simple promise that I would see to the preservation of order and to the observance of the Prussian regulations, and that I would practise some reserve in my intercourse with the prisoners.

Magdeburg is almost a Protestant town, and only possesses one modest Catholic church, but Providence had already provided that our men should not be entirely neglected. The merciless law of proscription which, as soon as the war broke out, was put in force against all Germans established in France, had driven the Abbé Werner von Enzenberg from Paris, where he laboured among the thirty thousand German artisans in that city. He was a Frenchman at heart, as by his temper, language, manners, and customs, and here, in exchange for his thirty thousand

workmen, he was placed in charge of the same number of French soldiers ! His zeal was only equalled by his amiability, and as he was related to prominent persons and enjoyed their protection, he was able to surmount the many difficulties which presented themselves at the commencement of his ministry.

This gentleman always wore the dress of a French ecclesiastic, and many were the gibes and sneers flung at him at first as he passed through the streets, where he was often surrounded or pursued by crowds of idlers or children, insulting him and calling him names. But he preserved his temper and his equanimity, and eventually forced the whole city to respect him.

One great service which the Abbé von Enzenberg rendered to the French army was the introduction of Sisters of Charity into the Magdeburg lazarettos. Our soldiers were dying off rapidly for want of proper nursing, and he proposed to call in the aid of these devoted ladies, but the hospital authorities would not hear of it. The Abbé thereupon

started for Berlin, had an audience of Queen Augusta, explained the frightful state of things to Her Majesty, and brought back to the hospital authorities a royal order that the Sisters should be admitted to the patients' bedsides.

At Magdeburg, even more than at any other place, the enormous agglomeration of sick persons rendered it necessary to set apart separate buildings for the numerous cases of contagious disease, as the whole community would otherwise be endangered. Small tents were therefore set up in the open, some distance apart, and only inhabited by one person. The smell from these cases was so nauseous that, notwithstanding the severity of the season, it was imperatively necessary to partially uncover these tents, as without that precaution it would have been impossible to approach the patients. In entering, one had to turn every moment to breathe, and could not refrain from shuddering with horror and disgust ; and often, sick and half-stifled, one had to rush away from the sufferer, a

prey to internal disturbances and uncomfortable sensations in the head, throat, and intestines. It was in most cases a virulent kind of small-pox or black-pox, whose strokes were always fatal. There were also some instances of a plague, unknown to the medical men, which quickly turned the flesh putrid.

It was a far more dreadful epidemic than I had seen raging at Ulm, and very soon the number struck down by it was so great that new lazarettos had to be built outside of the town. There were four hundred men in the Magdeburg barracks, four hundred and fifty at Ravensberg, two hundred and fifty in the Ton-Halle hospital on the left bank of the Elbe, one hundred and twenty in the Cleves bastion, more than a hundred small-pox patients at Pocken-Station, two hundred and thirty-five typhoid patients at Lazaretto-Train No. 1, one hundred and twenty at Lazaretto-Train No. 2, two hundred in the Ulrish hospital, two hundred and fifty in the Ulrish trenches, and in an isolated hut away from all the rest were fifty incurables

left for death. More than two thousand Frenchmen, therefore, were at that moment in Magdeburg writhing in the agony of these terrible diseases.

The Ton-Halle * hospital deserves especial mention. Before the war it was the place of entertainment for the inhabitants of the suburbs, but it had been requisitioned to receive a portion of the ever-rising tide of unfortunate French patients. Two hundred and fifty men were here, stretched upon a little hay and straw, no better than a dung-hill. Boxes, pit, gallery, stage, scene-room, were all crammed with French soldiers, and in the large ball-room those in the most serious stages of illness were placed, on little iron bedsteads. Every morning I found here the corpses of men who the day before believed themselves to have been in the prime of life and the full enjoyment of health. Those words of Dante, "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here," might very appropriately have been written over the portal of this

* Music Hall.

place, for there were very few families in all corners of France who did not lose at least one of their sons in it. On my first visit, accompanied by the Abbé von Enzenberg, I found it filled from pit to gallery with dying men lying about in all directions. After this introduction on the part of the Abbé, I visited the place every evening.

The saddest scenes, however, were to be witnessed in the morning, for then the corpses of victims who had died during the night were carried out to a central dépôt changed into a dead-house at what was called the barracks field-hospital. In the centre several tables were ranged, on which the coffins were placed, each one bearing the name of the defunct and the number of the grave into which it was to be placed. At the door stood about fifty unarmed French soldiers, and after prayers had been read some of them would step forward and bear the remains of their comrades away on litters. Then a procession was formed, a Prussian guard of honour at the head of it with loaded

rifles, and so the mournful cortège passed through the silent streets, the passers-by reverently uncovering, and often following on at the end. When the military burial-ground was reached, situated to the north-west near the fortifications, the coffins were lowered into a vast common grave at the sound of the drum, and after a short address from the officiating clergyman, the salvo was fired by the Prussian escort; for a simple soldier it was eight shots, for a corporal twelve, for a non-commissioned officer fifteen. Then we marched back to the barracks hospital, only to find collected there again as many more coffins placed for burial as we had just taken away. This kind of thing went on for a long time; it was sickening, horrifying, and heartrending.

One evening, on returning to the Erzherzog Stephan Hotel, I found the halls and lobbies filled with French officers, who had arrived at Magdeburg awaiting definite orders where to proceed to. There were a great number of generals, colonels, and other superior

officers of the army of Metz. These gentlemen pressed me to dine with them, and overwhelmed me with questions respecting the captives in Magdeburg. When I had answered all their questions, they gave me a great many particulars about the siege of Metz.

One Colonel of the Staff—M. Lewal—who has since attained the position of Minister of War, related to me the whole story of the capitulation to its smallest details, and General Micheler narrated the most important episodes connected with it. It would appear that immediately after the commencement of hostilities, when Bazaine knew that the Emperor had joined the army of MacMahon, a feeling of deep jealousy inspired his whole military conduct, and he was determined to compel Napoleon III. to look to the army of the Rhine for his safety, and not to that of Châlons; to lean upon him, and not upon the Duke of Magenta.

It is necessary to date back to this Machiavellian plot to find a sufficient explanation for the cataclysm of 1870. Up to

the fatal moment of the catastrophe at Sedan, all Bazaine's resolutions and actions openly tended towards the realisation of this plan. Instead of getting himself free, stretching out a hand to MacMahon, responding to his pressing messages, and joining his forces to those of that loyal soldier, Bazaine was determined to prove that he, and he alone, was sufficient for the Emperor and for France.

The defeat of Sedan, instead of opening his blinded eyes, still further confirmed him in these traitorous tactics. Although the Empire had fallen in Paris, did it not still live at Metz? Was not Bazaine still there, a great imperialist officer, drawing his pay as senator up to the last moment when there was no longer any senate? He exacted all the time prompt payment of enormous sums as Commander-in-chief, until his military chest was drained quite dry. He openly treated the French Republic as a sorry joke, and only spoke of the defence of Paris in order to scoff at that "little M. Trochu."

Public opinion has been moved with in-

dignation in France to think that amongst so many officers, superior to him both in capacity and in patriotism, there should not have been found a single man to stand up before the face of Bazaine and to say: "Marshal, it is enough! You are playing the game of the enemy, and betraying the country." Our history, pitiful as it already is, will not be able to record a more lamentable fact than this.

It seems, however, that before the capitulation was signed, a secret meeting of superior officers was held with a view to putting an end to the existing shameful state of things, to shoot Bazaine, and to enter upon a serious campaign against the Germans. This was what the majority were of opinion should be done. There was one among those present, however, and one of the most important, whose name I am bound not to disclose, who was in disagreement with the majority. "More than anybody," he said, "I deplore the conduct and policy of Marshal Bazaine, our Commander-in-chief; but, before approv-

ing of an open revolt against his authority, I must point out to you, gentlemen, what awkward effects would logically result from our action. To depose our chief, upset his authority, put him to death, may be a very good way of getting out of the unsatisfactory position we are in ; but it would do something else besides—it would discrown for ever that sacred edifice called the military hierarchy, destroy for ever all discipline in the French army, and give to the world the spectacle, unheard of in our history, of a great army casting off its pilot to grope along in the dark it knows not where. And besides, that which we do against Bazaine to-day our subordinates will be justified in doing against us to-morrow, and these in their turn would have to submit to the same treatment from their subalterns the day after to-morrow. The carrying out of this plan would entail everlasting anarchy in the French army. It will never have my approval. But nevertheless, is all lost, and is there nothing to be done? Far from it! If

rebellion is not to be thought of, we are not precluded from taking collective action to quash the plan of capitulation. Our colonels can wait upon the generals in a body, and our generals must wait upon Bazaine in a body, and tell him that we all wish to make a supreme effort. There are still two thousand horses in the town, our commissariat can still offer four days' provisions, and the Mayor enough for a fortnight. With our splendid troops, which have remained intact, we must break through the ring of iron that encircles us! We *must* get through, and we *will* get through!"

These words, so worthy of the hero of the Retreat of the Ten Thousand, were not listened to, and after some futile discussion the resolution of the majority was that not only should Bazaine not be shot, but they must not try to influence his decisions. And the very next day, at an unseasonable hour—not the hour he had fixed upon—Bazaine fled like a criminal, delivering up to the enemy the most magnificent, the

strongest, and most compact army which was ever placed on the frontier of France.

“Ah!” said the officer who had inspired the plot, addressing himself to me; “we were wrong; we ought to have shot Bazaine! It is said that the French Government intend to discharge all the officers of the army of the Rhine; the Government are right, we have deserved it. At the siege of Saragossa, when messengers came in under a flag of truce to propose terms of capitulation, they were first conducted to the public square—it was hung in black; then they were conducted into the church of Notre Dame del Pilar—the burial service was being read, and the church was full of officers, soldiers, and citizens, all on their knees. The army and the inhabitants were performing their own funereal rites. ‘Go now,’ said the Spanish General to the French messengers, ‘and understand that we are ready to die, but never to surrender.’ This is what we ought to have done at Metz.”

On the following day all these officers were sent on to Hamburg, to be interned

there until the end of the war, and they left us in the most frightful state, both materially and morally, that it is possible to imagine or to describe. The thirty thousand Frenchmen, penned up under the muzzles of the guns, in the outskirts of the town, were plunged into the direst misery. The rain and snow and ice of an exceptionally severe winter were the mildest of the evils from which they had to suffer. Many even of the officers were without clothing, and the wretched quarters of our thousands of sick, continually swept by gusts of wind and torrents of water, were only miserable shelters for dying men. When all the hospitals were filled with corpses, these poor fellows had to die without receiving the slightest attention, left to their fate in these wet and windy huts.

It will not be inappropriate here to give the text of the official document handed to me by General von Hanstein, and which procured me free ingress and egress at all the huts and hospitals. It ran as follows:—

“FORTRESS OF MAGDEBURG.

“The Abbé Guers, chaplain of St. Louis des Français at Rome, is hereby authorised to visit all the dépôts of prisoners at Magdeburg. The following list of companies will serve as a guide for him in his ministry. Each company consists of from 700 to 800 men :—

“1st Company, at the citadel.

“2nd Company, at the Ulrich Gate, in the drill hall.

“3rd and 4th Companies, at the Judenburg Gate.

“5th Company, at the Ulrich Gate, huts A and B.

“6th Company, at the Sondenburg Gate, in the carriage house.

“7th Company, at the Marck barracks.

“8th and 9th Companies, at the Ulrich Gate, huts C and D.

“10th and 11th Companies, at the Marck barracks.

“12th Company, under the Marck barracks.

“13th and 14th Companies, at the Ulrich Gate, huts E, F, G, H.

“15th and 16th Companies, at the Sondenburg Gate.

“17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th Companies, at the Ulrich Gate in huts.

“21st to 30th Companies, at the camp across the Elbe.

“31st to 35th Companies, in huts at Ulrich, H, I, J, K, L, M, N.

“36th Company, disbanded ; all sick.

“BARON VON HANSTEIN,

“General Commanding at Magdeburg.

“By order, Magdeburg, 23rd November, 1870.

“MAJUNKE, First Lieutenant.”

We left in the common pit at Magdeburg burial-ground eleven hundred and ninety-three French soldiers, and those who escaped the epidemic raised a monument to their memory in the shape of a graceful Greek mausoleum, bearing in bas-relief the figure of a dying French infantry soldier, pressing to his heart the flag of France. On the other side is placed this simple inscription :—

“TO THE MEMORY OF THE FRENCH SOLDIERS
WHO DIED AT MAGDEBURG, 1870-71,
THIS MONUMENT IS RAISED BY THEIR BROTHERS-IN-ARMS.
MAY THEY REST IN PEACE.”

Many were the visits paid to the tomb of Carnot, in the old city cemetery of Magdeburg, surrounded by a dense copse in the Sudenburg suburb. Carnot died an exile in that city on the 2nd August, 1823, and a simple black stone was placed over his grave, now grown over with ivy and bearing this inscription :—

“A 3172.
CARNOT.”

A subscription was raised among the five

hundred French officers at Magdeburg to procure a splendid wreath to lay on this tomb, which had been so long neglected, and they proposed to go in a body to lay this mark of respect on the last resting-place of their illustrious compatriot.

It was he who, in 1793, while a member of the Committee of Public Safety, issued, with Barrère, that final appeal to arms which, if it had been made and responded to in 1870, would perhaps have been the salvation of France. It was he who caused armies to spring out of the ground, which repelled all Europe united against us. He himself, though Minister of War, did not shrink from seizing a weapon like a common trooper, at Wattignies, to bring our broken battalions back into line, and to carry off a victory which saved the nation. In that frightful winter of 1793-94, before the appearance of Bonaparte, Carnot inaugurated the system of strategical manœuvres on a grand scale. He thrust the enemy's Generals Clairfayt and Cobourg across the Sambre,

and followed them up with his victorious troops into the heart of Germany, and occupied the strongest cities. Under the Directory he elaborated fresh plans of campaign, and sent Bonaparte into Italy and Jourdan and Moreau to the Rhine, to carry them out. Afterwards, as Napoleon's Minister, he shook the last European coalition, up to the disaster at Waterloo, and passed the last ten years of his life in rest and peace at Magdeburg. These were the reasons why the imprisoned officers at Magdeburg, who from their education and opinions belonged to the new régime established in France, wished to do honour to Carnot.

Others there were, whose family traditions and dearest convictions impelled them to hold back from honouring a man who had voted for the death of Louis XVI., and divided the Church and the Nation. But the subscription was a success, and Carnot had his wreath.

To the south of Magdeburg and of Prussian Saxony stands Halberstadt, a town of 25,000

inhabitants, and here had been formed one of the largest dépôts of French officers. In the beginning of December, four hundred officers were interned there with their servants and a few sick and wounded. The beautiful neighbourhood surrounding this town, from the village of Ströbeck and the famous grottoes of Clus, to the charming spots known as Bullerberg and Spiegelsberg, made of this town a privileged place of residence. It has a cathedral dating from the thirteenth century, and remarkable for its twin towers, its statues and sculptures, and its precious relics.

Herr Seneca, curé of St. Andrew's, in Halberstadt, and his vicar, both of whom spoke French well, had the spiritual charge of our prisoners here. They informed me that their duties were light enough in the city, but were very heavy at Blankenburg, on account of the arrival of several thousands of captives. This little Prussian town, which is within the boundaries of the Duchy of Brunswick, is two leagues from Halberstadt,

and entirely Lutheran. Herr Seneca and his vicar often went to visit the prisoners here, and performed Divine service among them. Their barracks were opposite the old castle of the Dukes of Brunswick, which was long used as a residence of another illustrious exile, Louis XVIII. of France.

On the road to Dresden, a railway ride of some hours to the south of Magdeburg, is Wittenberg, the Holy City of Prussia. It was here that Luther, after solemnly burning the papal bulls and the canonical books, accomplished all the principal acts of his life. After his death at his native town of Eisleben, his remains were removed to Wittenberg and interred in the chapel of the castle near those of Melanchthon his friend, and of the Elector Frederick of Saxony, his protector.

On the bronze gates of the temple are still engraved the ninety-five theses against the dogma of Indulgences which Luther placarded there, and his house, his room, furniture, and portraits, his statue in the market-place, and that of Melanchthon, are the objects of Pro-

testant pilgrimages from beyond the Rhine. The old electoral castle presents a broad and massive front, flanked by two enormous towers, and now serves as the citadel.

From this stronghold the Prussian garrison held watch over our five thousand prisoners, quartered in huts within range of the guns. There were on the average about three hundred sick, which were divided among the three field-hospitals: viz., the lazaretto hut, situated at the entrance to the city; the Danau bastion; and another hospital called the Tête-du-pont. At the end of December about a hundred wounded, at first nursed in the Frederick Barracks, were placed out in huts. Herr Püttmann, Catholic curé at Wittenberg, with the assistance of Herr von Huza, watched over the spiritual welfare of the Frenchmen in this dépôt.

At Halle, to the south of Magdeburg and midway to Leipzig, and the second town of Prussian Saxony, about five hundred sick Frenchmen were sheltered; a number of prisoners were also interned in various

localities in the neighbourhood, and allowed to work for the inhabitants. At Merseburg, Weissenfels, and Naumburg there were four hundred French officers. The Rev. Father Matthieu Lecomte, a Dominican from France, and the Rev. Father Hermann, had the joint care of these captives.

Halle was one of the first cities won over to the Reformation, and here, after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, many French people took up their residence. In the Glaucha suburb is established the greatest orphanage in Prussia, founded in 1698 by Doctor Franken.

It is clear, therefore, that Prussian Saxony was the cradle, and remains the home, of Protestantism. Within the range of a few neighbouring towns are concentrated all the souvenirs and relics of Luther and his colleagues and supporters. At Eisleben he passed his childhood ; at Magdeburg, Eisenach, and Erfurt he was a student ; at Wittenberg, a monk and priest ; at the Wartburg, a prisoner ; and at Marburg,

Worms, and Weimar took place his disputes with Melanchthon, Zwingli, Œcolampadius, Carlstadt, Münzer, etc., etc.

Another dépôt of prisoners was formed at Torgau, situated on the left bank of the Elbe, to the south-east of Magdeburg, and three miles from the Saxon boundary. It has fifteen thousand inhabitants, and is a fortified place, with an old feudal citadel now used as a barracks. In this fortress, which commands the whole country between the Elbe and Elster, a number of French prisoners were kept, varying from ten to fifteen thousand, with a constant average of about five hundred sick, almost all of whom died from the most frightful diseases. Up to the 12th January, 1871, there had already been eleven hundred and thirty-four deaths. The small-pox alone made about ten victims daily, and our soldiers had got into a very demoralised state. Placed at first under tents, then in rickety huts, they suffered severely from the cold. The excessive number of deaths moved the Prussian

authorities at last to make a small daily allowance of charcoal for each hut, but the miserable quantity doled out was quickly consumed, and then the transition from heat and smoke to a low degree of cold did more harm than good.

The poor half-naked fellows eagerly availed themselves of old worn-out cloaks of Prussian soldiers which were vouchsafed to them, but they were so dirty and ragged that they were scarcely fit to be touched except with a rag-picker's crook. Worn-out boots and shoes were also distributed among them, but those which could be got on to the feet were either down at the heels or out at the toes. The victuals allowed them, too, were only just enough to keep body and soul together—black bread mixed up with chopped straw (I have some of it still in my possession), skilly, and potatoes. Nothing more !

The sufferings at the camps of Mayence and Minden were pleasures when compared with the hardships which had to be undergone at Torgau. The dépôt was surrounded

by a wire fence, and guarded day and night by sentinels ready to fire upon any of the prisoners who should approach that fragile boundary. Indeed, as I neared the Austrian frontier I found the precautions taken became more rigorous, and some attempts of evasion at Torgau had made them doubly so.

The unfortunate patients in the hospitals at Torgau were the worst treated of any in Germany. The man who had the management of them—a civilian and a mountebank—would do nothing for them, and the attendants, also civilians, were regular brutes, leaving the poor fellows to rot in their filth without going near them, and hardly deigning to throw them their scanty allowance of food! The Abbé Galho, whom I had already met at Metz, and his companion the Abbé Jacques, a priest from Metz, who were on duty here, were without resources and perfectly helpless in the face of such a terrible state of things; it was a totally Protestant country, and they were left to

themselves. There was neither church, nor a hut, in which to hold Divine service, nor any Committee in the town to take any action! Torgau was the very worst corner of that vast French burial-ground called Germany!

I hastened on to Erfurt, capital of Old Thuringia. It is a curious old city, said to owe its foundation to King Dagobert of France, who set up its University. There are now forty thousand inhabitants, but in the fifteenth century there were double that number. It was completely burnt down in 1417, but rose from its ashes and gradually recovered its antique splendour. Its position midway between the large towns of Gotha and Weimar is favourable to its becoming the greatest industrial and commercial centre of Southern Prussia, as it formerly was of the whole of Lower Germany.

It was at Erfurt that Luther—who was finishing his education there—saw his dearest friend struck dead at his feet by lightning,

and it was this that determined him to enter a monastery of St. Augustine. When he preached the Reformation, Erfurt embraced it warmly, and took part in the disastrous struggles which devastated so many provinces at that time.

Prussia took Erfurt from the Elector of Mayence in the eighteenth century, and in the nineteenth it became a French town for a period of eight years, from 1806 to 1814. On the 27th September, 1808, Napoleon I. held there the famous Congress of Sovereigns, the most brilliant assembly of monarchs of our epoch. The guests of Napoleon on this occasion included the Czar of Russia ; the Kings of Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Westphalia, and Saxony ; and a host of ministers, diplomats, plenipotentiaries, generals, ambassadors ; all brought together in the grand palace of the Electors of Mayence.

Here was the French army again in Erfurt in 1870-71, but under what different circumstances ! Fifteen thousand soldiers were now grovelling in shame and exile with five hun-

dred officers ; and a thousand sick, who paid the death tribute to the extent of three hundred and nine victims, were lying helpless in five improvised field-hospitals on the muddy banks of the Gera.

If these figures are compared with those of the other dépôts, the losses appear small, so that, although worn out by fatigue, hardships, hunger, cold, and forced labour, and broken down by so many trials and humiliations, our soldiers conquered death itself at Erfurt. This result was owing principally to the heroic efforts of the Abbé Trippé, curé of St. Nicholas, Erfurt, and Herr von Michaëlis, the General-in-Command, and his wife. They treated our sick people as if they were their own children, and with the aid of Sisters of Charity, who were allowed to visit the patients, they made innumerable distributions of all kinds of comforts and necessities among our men ; they are worthy the eternal gratitude of France.

CHAPTER IX.

Eastern Prussia—Berlin—Spandau—Stettin—Danzig—
Königsberg — Posen — Gross-Glogau — Graudenz —
Breslau—Glatz—Cosel—Dresden and the Kingdom
of Saxony—Line of Operations of a Prusso-Russian
War—The Struggle to come.

ON passing through a crowd of all sorts and conditions of unknown people, at one's first entry into a foreign city, a painful feeling of total isolation takes possession of one's soul. It is then that is felt the ironic truthfulness of the saying: "A great town is a desert."

I arrived at Berlin in the midst of the war of 1870-71. It was in the evening of the 30th November when I set foot within its gates, just at the time when the horizon was darkened by a series of disastrous events. King William had just despatched that famous telegram to Queen

Augusta announcing the "complete rout" of the army of the Loire, the last bulwark of defence hastily built up by the country. It stated that General d'Aurelles-Paladines was mortally wounded, and his troops crushed and flying. Berlin was electrified! The greatest animation reigned in every quarter, the streets echoed with noisy conversations, every house was covered with flags from basement to roof, and the sound of cannon booming in the distance made the capital thrill with joy triumphant. And yet it was not exactly the idea of victory that caused all the exultation. This hope and desire was foremost on every lip: "Now the war is surely over! Now we must have peace!" These good Berliners received a rude shock, however, when fresh despatches arrived next day telling of new battles with the 3rd French Corps, the forced retreat of the Prussians on the Loire, and the heroic resuscitation of our young troops which were deemed incapable of withstanding the rush of the compact German armies.

What, then, was the meaning of this great telegraphic lie of King William's, announcing our "complete rout" on the 30th November? The meaning of it was this: It was necessary in order to stimulate the bellicose ardour of his people, who longed for peace as much as the French did, and perhaps more.

The Berlin station is nothing but a cheerless hut, and as mean as the meanest station in France, but the yard is full of cabs and carriages. So different from the custom that prevails everywhere else, it is not, at Berlin, the cabman who looks for a fare, but the traveller has to go in search of the cabman. A ticket is given you at the gate, and you must sally forth in quest of your automaton. You will probably find him perched on his box fast asleep, and he will be surprised and angry at the person audacious enough to claim the services of himself and his vehicle. After finding my man and repeating over and over again the only three words I could say to him, "Moabit, Dominikaner Kloster" (The Dominican Convent, Moabit Quarter), off we started.

I was provided with letters for the Rev. Father Aquilanti, the superior, and Father de Robiano, a monk in that establishment, and I was eager to get there to recruit my forces and organise the visitation of the hospitals in the capital and neighbourhood. By the time we had passed through the illuminated streets of Berlin it was quite night. Dark workmen's dwellings succeeded to the brilliant shops, and dark lanes to the splendid boulevards; the noisy and crowded streets gave place to silent and deserted suburbs, and the dazzling light was followed by a darkness through which could just be distinguished the falling of a thick shower of fine snow.

We were now in the open country, and the cabman pulled up. He came to the door and invited me to alight and pay my fare. This I positively refused to do, and insisted on his finishing the journey, continually repeating: "Dominikaner Kloster!" At last he decided to go on again, and we jogged along for a time in solitude and silence.

Suddenly the cab heeled over and pitched on its side into a muddy pool. The driver stormed and swore at his cab, his horse, his customer, his business, my convent, and earth and heaven, whilst I crept cautiously from the rickety vehicle. We managed to get it up again between us, and groped about like blind men for the lost track. The man got more and more hostile and furious, and screeched without ceasing, "Geld! Geld!" (money! money!) The only answer I gave him was "Kloster! Kloster!" and presently, pointing to the gleam of some distant windows, he succeeded in persuading me that with a little effort I should reach my journey's end; and turning his horse's head in the direction of Berlin he left me there alone with my baggage in the middle of the night, in a country covered with snow and ice, soaked and soiled as I was by the fall into the slush, without guide or weapon, and fatigued by a long and harassing journey in the depth of winter!

I was certainly in a sorry plight! but I

plucked up my courage and seized my trunk, and plodded along across the fields in the direction of the desired haven. At last I arrived at an outer gate, and passed into a wide, brilliantly-lighted courtyard, at the end of which was an imposing vestibule paved with marble and adorned with gilt candelabra, which led to the lodge.

Descending the staircases from the upper stories, and coming up the corridors from the basement, numbers of young persons now appeared before me, dressed in black, with a Puritan rigidity, much resembling our gravest Catholic nuns. I looked at the group advancing on the right—they took to instant flight ; I cast my eyes on the group on the left—they rushed away helter-skelter, raising cries of alarm which echoed and re-echoed under the vaulted roofs of the building.

At last a man of solemn demeanour and in clerical costume approached me, and addressed me in terms which I could not understand. I explained my errand, and then he said,—

"You are not at the Dominican Convent, sir, but at the residence of the Protestant Deaconesses of Berlin. We cannot receive you."

"Reverend sir," I replied, "whether you are Protestants or Catholics here, we are all Christians. Just consider! I am worn out with fatigue, and have lost my way in these lonely fields on this dark and snowy night. Be so charitable as to give me a morsel of bread and allow me to sleep at the lodge door. At the earliest hour in the morning I will go on my way again."

"No, no! there is neither bread nor lodging with us for a French Roman Catholic priest."

And he pushed me away from the door, and slammed and bolted it. That is a specimen of Teuton Christian charity!

Arrived in the open again, a feeling of profound discouragement seized upon me, tears came to my eyes, and the cold paralysed my limbs; but Providence sent me help in the shape of a young journeyman jeweller,

who happened to be a friend of the Abbé von Enzenberg, and had been expelled from Paris with all his family. He chanced to be passing that way, and taking up my trunk, he led me, through a neighbourhood studded with villas, to 57, Thurmstrasse, the Dominican Convent I was in search of. I was almost at my last gasp, but after a light repast I slept peacefully and profoundly.

It was a strange notion of the founder of this convent—the Rev. Father Rouard de Card, a Frenchman of Limoges, and a distinguished preacher—to place it in this Moabit neighbourhood, peopled, as it was, by radical and socialist workmen, and on one occasion it was regularly besieged by a mob of Berlin roughs for two days and nights, the windows smashed, the chapel bombarded, fences broken down, and walls scaled. The five poor monks had only just time to change their clothes, secure the communion plate, and climb the wall into an adjoining garden, when the mob broke in. And then the police and cavalry arrived. The socialist

rioters were surrounded, and hewn down like grass ; several of them were killed and many more wounded, and for some time after when any one appeared in the streets with his arm in a sling, or walking with a crutch, he was arrested, and had to prove that he was not at the Moabit riot before he was let go again. They know how to do these things in Berlin !

The Dominican Fathers took a righteous revenge for this outrage. Every day afterwards they visited the slums and alleys, and brought relief to the families most in want, in spite of the threats and insults with which they were often received.

Father de Robiano, who belonged to one of the most illustrious families in Belgium, had special charge of the sick and wounded in the central hospital at Berlin, and the few Frenchmen, officers, and soldiers who were there were admirably nursed by nuns under the special protection of Queen Augusta. He accompanied me thither several times, and on one occasion I had the honour of



EMPRESS AUGUSTA.

greeting the Queen of Prussia, then about to receive the Imperial crown of Germany. Her kind disposition, her benevolence and modesty, left a profound impression upon me. She manifested great interest in the depôts I had already visited, promised her valuable assistance on behalf of the most neglected ones, expressed a strong desire that I should go to Spandau, and promised to use her influence with Monseigneur Namzanowski, almoner-in-chief, in order to remove the initial difficulties which I should find at first in my humble ministry. I spoke to Her Majesty of her daughter, the Grand Duchess of Baden, and the flattering account I gave of her daughter's charitable efforts brought the tears to her eyes.

The nuns entrusted with the care of our sick soldiers were loud in their praises of Queen Augusta, and judging from her broad charity and distinguished merits I was persuaded she must have been a Catholic at heart.

In 1861, Berlin only contained half a

million of inhabitants, but now its population numbers one million four hundred thousand ; in no other capital of Europe has the population increased so rapidly. Among this number there are only ninety thousand Catholics, and there is one magnificent Catholic church, St. Hedwig, in the centre of the city. And yet a Catholic priest dared not show himself in public : the town was in a permanent state of siege against all those wearing the frock of a monk or the gown of a priest.

Whenever I went out I became the object of unpleasant demonstrations and insulting remarks, and these were by no means confined to idlers in the streets, but proceeded just as often from balconies and windows. Several times, indeed, policemen saved me from rough usage, and on one occasion I was so closely pressed that I thought it advisable to enter a clothing establishment and change my costume for civilian's garments before continuing my journey to the hospital. This time also I owed my safety to the police.

Her Majesty the Queen of Prussia having graciously promised to use her influence for me with Monseigneur Namzanowski, I waited upon his Highness to obtain the powers indispensable to the French chaplains in the prosecution of their ministry in Germany. In fact, as I had formed the intention of going to the extreme northern boundary of Prussia, his sanction was necessary in my own case.

The Bishop resided at No. 1, Saint Michaelsplatz, where a very strange reception awaited me. Instead of the dignified manner in which the Bishops of Catholic Europe receive their visitors, this prelate gave me audience in *déshabillé*,—blue dressing-gown, black trousers and slippers, and a cigar in his mouth, like any vulgar tradesman. He did not seem to be favourably disposed towards our work, and was provoked at what I had done, and out of temper with my humble person. He said he had just written a letter to Bishop Mermillod, and he read it to me. It was a comminatory letter unworthy of

being written by a successor of the Apostles, and humiliating to a man who had been one of the greatest benefactors to our captive army.

But Bishop Namzanowski treated me still worse than he treated the Bishop of Geneva. Notwithstanding my humblest entreaties, he obstinately refused to grant me the desired sanction and authorisations. That same evening, therefore, I wrote direct to Rome, hoping to receive them from Pope Pius IX. himself, through a powerful friend at the Vatican. My hopes were not misplaced. The sovereign pontiff, immediately informed of the situation, granted full and entire jurisdiction to all the French chaplains employed up to that time in Germany to watch over our unfortunate soldiers, and authorised Bishop Mermillod to extend the same sanction to all those who should subsequently apply for it.

The town of Spandau, which I visited after Berlin, is a little place not far from the capital, between the Havel and the mouth of

the Spree, and contains ten thousand inhabitants. It is the Prussian Vincennes. Before entering it one passes on the high road a lake, from the midst of which rises the citadel of this immense fortress, flanked with bastions, ramparts, and advanced works. In the view of the Berliners, this unique position, on an island surrounded by swampy ground, renders the citadel absolutely impregnable.

The French troops carried it, however, in 1806, when they turned Berlin into a real French town. Its arsenal is reckoned to be the most valuable and important in Europe. Its powerful bastion "Julius," topped by a tower of the same name, attracts special attention by reason of its imposing mass and the important use to which it is put. In one of its vaults lies the famous war treasure, heaped up by the Kings of Prussia and swelled by the French milliards. The exact spot where it lies is the close secret of the Prussian Government. A General enjoying its full confidence is always told off to defend and guard it.

Knowing that there were three hospitals at Spandau filled with sick Frenchmen decimated by contagious diseases, I went at once to headquarters to ask for authority to visit them without delay. I was received most cordially by General von Streit, who was in command of the place. He was a very superior man, and a fervent Catholic converted from Lutheranism.

"We have," he said, "three hundred and fifty French soldiers in danger of death, and no priest capable of assisting them. It grieves me very much, responsible as I am before God and man for this great calamity. A zealous vicar of the parish comes every day to offer his services to your unfortunate countrymen, devoting the little French he knows to their comfort and consolation. Nearly all of them refuse to listen to him, however, from patriotic scruples. Come, I will take you now to the central lazaretto, and to-morrow you shall have the necessary authority to enter all the ten dépôts of prisoners, and one of my men to accompany

you everywhere, and to be at your orders as long as you remain among us."

Could a French General have spoken or done better?

I passed the whole of this first day in the various wards of the central lazaretto of Spandau, and was welcomed with delight and enthusiasm by the poor sick fellows. During the day I met the parish vicar, Herr Paul Obst, in one of the wards, and we afterwards continued to visit the camp and fortress and huts together.

Our men had a very good time of it here, thanks to the paternal care of General von Streit. Each of the ten groups of huts in the camp contained from a thousand to twelve hundred men, under the surveillance of Prussian officers. The most unfortunate were those stationed at a desolate spot a league from the town; there were fifteen hundred of them, and the only outlook they had was ice and snow for a long distance round. I wept on leaving them.

In the meantime the celebrated Father

Hermann, a bare-footed Carmelite, arrived at Spandau, and I was thus relieved to prosecute my journey to the north of Prussia, while he stayed and died like a hero at the post of honour.

I soon arrived on the shores of the Baltic, or more properly speaking at the estuary of the Oder, where, on the left bank, stands the town of Stettin, containing eighty thousand inhabitants, of whom scarcely sixteen hundred are Catholics. Its position on the river and the four islands washed by its waters is a magnificent one; and the charming hills all around, its wide promenades by the water, and splendid avenues, make it one of the most cheerful towns in Europe. It is fortified with ancient ramparts flanked by towers and moats, the importance of which is increased by more modern advanced works. After having been the property in turn of the Dukes of Pomerania, the Kings of Sweden, and the Kings of Poland, this territory became in 1713 a fief of the King of Prussia, and has remained Prussian ever since, except-

ing for the duration of the French occupation by General Grandeau from 1806 to 1813.

Under the active and zealous direction of the Abbé Albert von Wech, three chaplains ministered among our captives here, either in the town of Stettin or in the environs. From the capitulation of Metz to that of Paris their number fluctuated between twenty and thirty thousand. They were located in three forts, bearing the names respectively of Prussia, William, and Leopold, as well as in the great artillery barracks, and in other buildings belonging to the State. On the parade ground, also, there was an encampment of canvas tents and straw-thatched huts containing several thousands of men, and soup-kitchens for six thousand. At the Polygon, again, a league out of the town, was a depôt of four thousand men under wooden huts.

At Alt-Damm, two leagues away, was another group of huts, also containing four thousand men. By the beginning of December 1870 every available place in Stettin was so overcrowded with sick (there were

then more than two thousand!) that the surplus had to be distributed among the adjacent towns, such as Neustadt, Passewald, Stargard, etc.

General Vogel von Falkenstein, who held the command at Stettin, was extremely harsh towards the thirty thousand French soldiers committed to his care, but he was especially barbarous in his treatment of civilian prisoners, of whom large numbers were sent in from France, and more particularly from the department of the Loiret. These he condemned to forced labour. It was a sad picture to look upon,—a crowd of peasants, most of them emaciated old men, enfeebled by the trials and hardships of the war, worn out by a long and painful journey, some of them half naked, others without shoes, forced to break stones from morning till night under the walls of the town, in mud and snow or pelting rain. That was their miserable fate, and numbers succumbed to it.

One of these prisoners, M. Fautras, a schoolmaster of Bricy, near Patay, gives

a detailed account of their sufferings in a work he afterwards published.* After having passed through all the German frontier towns, cruelly treated by their guards, and greeted with cries of "Thieves! bandits! assassins! swine!" the unfortunate people arrived at Frankfort. Here they were placed in the custody of five Pomeranians, a sergeant and four privates, who treated them with the greatest brutality, driving them into the corners of the railway carriage and keeping them there, and venting their spite upon them by pushing them about and threatening them with their sabres or rifles. They could not speak a word of French, and used the points of their bayonets in order to express their wishes. A brandy bottle was constantly circulating among them, and they were almost always intoxicated. The sergeant was as brutal to his own men as to his prisoners, and if one of them happened to close his eyes for a few instants, a vigorous blow with the fist in the face reminded him of his duty. At every

* *Cinq Mois de Captivité*, by Gustave Fautras : Orleans..

station where the train stopped the prisoners were shown as curiosities to the crowds which were waiting there. "The night which preceded our arrival at Frankfort," adds M. Fautras, "two of our companions in misfortune, one aged seventy and the other fifty-five, showed signs of mental derangement. They called their wives, demanded their cattle, and the keys of their houses. They calmed down somewhat when morning came, and then one of the Pomeranians struck one of them, who in return bit one of the man's fingers. This enraged the guards to such a degree that they seized the two poor wretches, tied them hand and foot, laid them on the carriage floor, and beat them unmercifully with the flat of their sabres, pricked them with their bayonets, and pointed their rifles at them, amid the yells and screams of the victims."

Most of these unfortunate people died after their arrival at Stettin ; M. Fautras lost eighteen of his neighbours and friends among them, of whom sixteen were fathers of families.

The French officers made efforts to mitigate their lot, but in vain. At the instigation of M. Rajat of Lille and M. Jamet of Metz, a relief committee was formed on behalf of these prisoners at Stettin, both civil and military, but the former were not allowed to participate in the benefits, the orders to that effect being severe and strictly enforced. "We look upon them," said General von Falkenstein, "as brigands, robbers, and assassins; they have been guilty of killing our wounded Germans and robbing our dead in the plains of the Orleanais."

The army doctors had organised a very good system of sanitary measures at Stettin, and divided the whole into two sections; the first comprised six field-hospitals spread over an area of two leagues to the south-west of the town, and the other was composed of nine field-hospitals covering three leagues of ground to the north.

After the 15th October the mortality increased to a frightful extent. One hundred and thirty succumbed in November, and alto-

gether five hundred and ninety-one Frenchmen left their bones on these distant banks of the Oder!

The Prussian military authorities, at their wits' end to find provisions, when the prisoners arrived from Metz, had entered into a contract with a Jew at Stettin to supply victuals for them. This miserable Iscariot allowed the poor fellows to die of hunger, and filled his own pockets at the expense of their lives! An official inquiry was held, and it was proved that the Israelite had highly adulterated all the articles of food, and shortened all the rations. The most fortunate amongst our men were those who were able to drag themselves to the immense cauldrons at the doors of the canteens, to pick up the leavings and sweepings and devour them by stealth!

Danzig, at the mouth of the Vistula, was the next town I arrived at. It is a town of old houses and fantastic architecture, picturesque terraces and long irregularly-built streets, and sixty-four thousand inhabitants.

It is well fortified, and is traversed by two small rivers, the Mottlau and the Radaunde. It surrendered to the French Marshal Lefèvre on the 21st May, 1807, who thence acquired his title of Duke of Danzig, and in 1813 it was defended for nine months by the French General Rapp, but had at last to surrender. At the Peace of Paris, in 1814, it reverted to Prussia.

There were twelve thousand captives here, under the care of a Prussian army chaplain, assisted by Father de Verra, and the hospitals contained a large number of sick. The soldiers of Metz, indeed, paid a heavy tribute at Danzig in suffering and death.

After having passed over the celebrated battle-fields of Eylau and Friedland—where Napoleon I. forced the Prussian king, with his queen and court, to fly to Königsberg, ready to go into exile—I arrived at the last-mentioned town, the ancient capital of the kingdom. It numbers ninety-thousand inhabitants, and is famous for its antique buildings, its university, and its great men—Kant,

Herder, Werner, Dach, etc. Situated on the Pregel, at the eastern extremity of the Gulf of Danzig, and separated from the Baltic by the Frische Haff, an immense piece of water serving for a harbour, and offering protection against attacks from seaward, this is one of the strongest of German cities. The Russian frontier is only eight miles distant, and close to it stands Tilsit, so well known from the famous treaty signed there in 1807 between the Czar Alexander of Russia, Frederick William III. of Prussia, and Napoleon I.

During three long years of tribulation the father and mother of the first German Emperor, William I., the conqueror of Austria and France, found at Königsberg the last refuge of their royal house. The memoirs of the Countess von Voss, who accompanied the Prussian royal family in its misfortunes, are attractive and fortifying reading for Frenchmen in the humiliations of the last few years, and one or two quotations will not be out of place here.*

* *Soixante-neuf ans à la Cour de Prusse* : 1876.



NAPOLEON I.

Under date of 22nd March, 1797, Frau von Voss writes : " To-day at a quarter to three a child was born ; it is a little Prince, very strong and healthy, but very boisterous." This was the future William I., crowned Emperor at the royal palace of Versailles in 1870.

In 1806, Napoleon took up his quarters in the royal palace of Berlin, and the Prussian Court wandered from Erfurt to Danzig, and from Danzig to Königsberg. The Countess writing at this time said : " The kingdoms of this world rise up for a time, only to fall and disappear, carried away by the irresistible tide of events. Does it not seem that the Prussian monarchy is about to go down in this storm, unless a miracle comes to save us ? The mighty hand of God alone can save us from Napoleon. Our troops are good and brave, but they are not, like his, disciplined and inured to war. He is a master of war, but we are novices at it. He, however, will fall some day, but it will perhaps then be too late for our beloved Germany !

May Heaven take pity on us, and rid the world of this wretch, the scourge of humanity !”

The Countess accompanied the King and Queen of Prussia on their journey to Tilsit. “ Oh, misery ! ” she exclaimed ; “ the wretch is taking from us the whole of Westphalia, Magdeburg, the Mark, Halberstadt, Posen, etc., etc. He is leaving the King hardly anything. Merciful God, wilt Thou not put an end to the existence of this abominable man ? Ah, my poor Queen ! she will cry herself to death ! ”

On the 28th, December, 1809, the unfortunate mother of the first German Emperor returned to Berlin, to die. When, in 1870-71, some one spoke to King William of Prussia at Ferrières of the desolation his troops were spreading in France, he said : “ Ah, if you knew to what extent France made my mother suffer when we were at Königsberg, you would think we were taking a very moderate revenge.”

The brave Abbé Rambaud, of Metz, was devoting himself to the welfare of our ten

thousand captives at Königsberg, and worked wonders by his energetic efforts. He built a chapel in the middle of the camp, and workshops for those able to labour, and the Prussian authorities were so touched by his devotion to the men's interests that they overlooked him when the order came from Berlin to expel all the French priests.

It was indeed a time of severe trial for all the French chaplains in Germany. The original cause of it was a midnight mass, which was arranged to be held in the prisoners' camp at Mayence. The Prussian soldiers having overheard our men agreeing to meet for the *réveillon* (midnight mass), mistook the word, and made up their minds that it was a plot for a great *rebellion*. Bismarck, who was informed on the instant, ordered the most rigorous measures to be taken against the captives, and especially against the priests. Many of the latter were suddenly torn from their ministry of peace and consolation, and were shut up in prison without trial. I myself only escaped from close confinement

at Hamburg through the protection and intervention of an exalted personage at Berlin, whose name I am not at liberty to mention.

Three hundred and thirty-three Frenchmen sleep their last sleep in the military burial-ground at Königsberg!

The fortress of Graudenz, on the right bank of the Vistula, contained two thousand French soldiers, who were in a most forlorn and neglected state. "Elsewhere," said the Rev. Father de Damas, who was devoting his life to them, "the prisoners have some little dealings with the outer world, and enjoy the sight of a little active life; but here, at Graudenz, there is nothing but walls, and ramparts, and ditches, and everlasting snow; nothing to see or hear to cheer the heart of these forlorn creatures."

Posen, or Prussian Poland, has for capital a city of the same name, which counts a population of fifty thousand, and is situated in a beautiful plain, surrounded by pleasant hills. This city is famous for its citadel, built on an island in the river Warthe, its magnificent

cathedral, its Gothic town hall, wide streets, and rich suburbs. The fierce Prussian General Steinmetz was in command here, and his iron hand weighed heavily on the eight thousand prisoners in his custody.

There was a motive for this man being placed here. In no German town were our men so well received as in Posen. The sympathies existing between Poland and France are well known, and they were loudly manifested on the arrival at Posen of the very first batch of prisoners, and gifts of clothes and necessaries flowed in from all classes of society, even from the very poorest.

I met in Posen three young Polish soldiers who had been wounded while fighting against the French at Wissembourg. "Do not believe," they said, "that we have any ill-feeling against you. The Prussians enlisted us against our will ; they put us in the front of the battle, and made our breasts shield them like a living wall from the French bullets. We did not fire a shot against our French brothers,—we would rather have

died! And after the fight we picked up your wounded, relieved them, and carried them to the ambulances. During their forced marches, those of your captives who were fainting by the way often found the friendly arm or shoulder of a Pole to lean upon, and many a Pole was struck by the Prussian officers for bearing dying Frenchmen in their arms; and often, too, under the pretext that they were together plotting an escape, they were tied to the same tree and shot!"

The most severe part of the winter had to be passed, in Posen, under tents, and during the month of December several men died from the cold. The night of the 15th was an especially terrible one: a violent storm blew down all the tents, and sick ones and all were left on the frozen ground without any covering.

Gross-Glogau, on the Oder, is the strongest fortress in Silesia. Glogau means "thorn-bush" in the old Slavonic tongue, and thus it proved to be for the unfortunate prisoners interned there. They were to the number

of fifteen thousand, some being located in huts, some in barracks, stables, warehouses, etc. They had to sleep on straw, with two blankets apiece to cover them, and the quantity and quality of their food left much to be desired.

The number of sick here was about the usual average. There were five hospitals established in huts outside of the town, and in these were tended from six to eight hundred typhus and dysentery patients ; besides this, a place called the Laboratory was filled with small-pox patients, and two more lazarettos were crowded with men suffering from various ailments. The whole were under the medical care of ten German doctors, and under the spiritual care of two army chaplains. Four hundred dead are interred in the garrison burying-ground.

Breslau is the capital of Silesia, and is situated near the confluence of the Oder and the Ohlau. It has a population of one hundred and forty thousand, and is in importance the third town in the kingdom of Prussia. Our

officers, soldiers, and sick, interned here, were in the same uncomfortable state as those at Posen, but the population was also sympathetic.

To the south of Breslau, in the fortress of Schweidnitz, were two thousand French prisoners, mostly Alsacians, and these were watched over by the Abbé Brugier. At Glatz, too, on the Austrian frontier, four thousand more were located, and here there was the appalling average of seven hundred sick. The Abbé Viola and Herr Coeven, the chaplain, shared the labour and danger at this dépôt. A strange incident was brought to my notice here. The camp abutted upon a market garden. Under one of the tents the prisoners used to work during the night at excavating a tunnel, the entrance to which they carefully hid during the day. Fifty prisoners had already disappeared by means of this underground passage, and the angry General then came himself and inspected the camp, called the captives together, and threatened them with the cells,

court-martial, and death, if they dared to attempt any more evasions. Next night fifty more got away by the same exit, and in the morning the country was scoured by Uhlans. Some of the men were shot down, several were brought back, and a small number managed to cross the Austrian frontier.

At Neisse, an important city of Silesia, and a first-class Prussian fortress, fifteen thousand Frenchmen were interned, and twelve hundred sick were in the hospitals, with no one to care for their spiritual welfare. The Abbé Theodore Lamarche, one of the most distinguished chaplains from Metz, left me at Berlin to devote himself to these prisoners at Neisse, but he was warned off by General Knaudt, who commanded there. The number of deaths here amounted to six hundred and ninety-seven!

The Mayor of Argenteuil, seized by the Prussians at the siege of Paris, was also a prisoner at Neisse, and confined in bastion No. 6 of the citadel. At first he had

been allowed to move about freely in the town, but towards Christmas this privilege was denied him, and without any reason being given he was shut up in the fortress. The confinement had such an effect upon his mind that one night he escaped from the bastion, bare-headed, and with only a thin pair of shoes on his feet, and fled across the snow towards the Austrian frontier. He arrived at last at Ziegenhals, half a league from the frontier, which he would have easily reached if he had followed the main road ; but thinking that a large forest which stretched away on his right would offer greater security, he tried to reach it by crossing the river Biela on the ice. He got across with some difficulty, and entered the forest, and wandered about in the snow for several hours, passed and repassed the Austrian frontier, and at last returned to the forest, where he sank down benumbed and exhausted. Next morning an old woman who was gathering wood found him lying in the snow, took him to her hut, lighted a fire,

and dried his clothes, and bathed his frost-bitten feet in hot water. This imprudent though well-meant action put the fugitive's feet in such a state that it was impossible for him to walk. The news soon spread through the village, and a farmer in the neighbourhood took him to his house ; here the Mayor was tended by a doctor for a time, and then sent on to Ottmachau, in Silesia. Here the unfortunate man's feet grew worse, and one of them dropped completely off, and of the other nothing was left but the heel. When the authorities were informed of the circumstances they behaved very kindly to him, and allowed him eventually to return to France.

The little town of Cosel, containing only three thousand souls, had its population trebled by the arrival of six thousand French soldiers, most of them having belonged to the unfortunate army of the Rhine. Here, after the middle of December, the camp was struck, and the men were lodged in comfortable huts, and the typhoid and small-pox

patients well provided for. They were tended by nuns, and the Count and Countess Prashma afforded them bountiful relief ; the latter also established a field-hospital at Wiersbel, which had been totally neglected in that respect, and indeed extended their charity to all our captives in Silesia. The chaplain at Cosel was authorised to watch over our men at that place.

We now enter the kingdom of Saxony, at present a simple prefecture under the orders of Berlin. Its brilliant capital, Dresden, on the banks of the Elbe,—with its hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, broad squares, magnificent buildings, splendid shops, and museums comparing favourably with the best ones in Italy,—well merits its surname of the Florence of the North. A considerable number of officers and fifteen thousand soldiers were interned here, the men being located in the camp of Ubigau, on the opposite side of the Elbe, surrounded by a cordon of cavalry and artillery. There had been several evasions here, and they were more

closely watched than at the dépôts situated further from the frontier.

Three hundred French prisoners succumbed to their hard treatment at Dresden, and most of them were buried in the Protestant cemetery of Dresden-Neustadt, only two of them having been placed in the Catholic cemetery of Dresden-Friedrichstadt. According to the official list of deaths furnished to me by the Saxon army chaplain, we lost in this province—besides those who died at Dresden—one hundred and nineteen at Katitz, seventy-seven at Leipzig, fourteen at Königstein, two at Bautzen, four at Zittau, three at Chemnitz, one at Dahlen, one at Erimnitzchau, one at Plauen.

Königstein is the Mont Valérien of Dresden. This fort is placed on the summit of an enormous rock, nearly five hundred feet above sea-level, and it commands the whole surrounding country. It is one of the most ancient citadels of Europe, and one of the few that have never been taken. Napoleon I. vainly tried to bombard it. It was

now full of prisoners, and all access to it was prohibited.

Leipzig, the second town of the kingdom, and one of the most busy commercial centres in Germany, appeared to me, in the depth of the winter season, as dull as any country village. Only when spring arrives does the town wake up into activity. Its library is one of the richest in Europe, and is the centre whence every important German work proceeds. In 1813, Leipzig was the scene of the famous three days' battle called by the Germans "the struggle of the nations." Sixty thousand men perished in it, and Napoleon, harassed by the allied armies, had to beat a retreat, which ended in Elba and St. Helena. Two thousand Frenchmen were now in captivity here amid the ice and snow, waiting for their deliverance.

I cannot quit this eastern frontier of Prussia without remarking that the strategical line skirting the countries through which I had just passed will be the theatre of the future great war between the Teutons and the

Slavs. Whoever comes off victorious in this struggle will be the masters of Europe. The opinion I heard expressed by Prussian officers of all grades with whom I had the opportunity of speaking was invariably the same: "We have conquered Austria and France; now Russia remains. She will have her turn." That is German opinion.

The Russian General Skobeleff, too, in his addresses at Paris and St. Petersburg, continually repeated this phrase: "War is inevitable between the Slav and the Teuton. It is even not far off, and it will be long, bloody, and terrible."

The idea, indeed, is a terrific one: one hundred and fifty millions of men flying at each other's throats, from the Black Sea to the Baltic, and from the Vistula to the Danube! and all the hordes from Asia, armed and disciplined up to the modern standard, rushing down upon Germany! It would be a renewal of the great barbaric invasions of Attila or of Gengis Khan! In the meantime, Berlin is closely studying the ground on

which this colossal struggle will be fought out, and its *Tageblatt* has already published several treatises on the subject which are well worthy of attention.

The triple alliance which Bismarck's genius succeeded in concluding between Germany, Austria, and Italy is a two-edged sword, ready, on the one hand, to come down upon France, and, on the other, to form a barrier against any Russian advance westward. Neither of these powers, however, is under any misapprehension as to the future conflict. "The battle of Sadowa," says M. E. Marbeau,* "was fought to settle the question whether Prussia or Austria should represent the German race in Europe. At Sedan, the question was whether France or Prussia should wield the sceptre of Europe. Prussia has succeeded in bringing the German race under her hegemony, and in transferring from Paris to Berlin the political meridian of Europe. Now it is the East which is threatening the West : hordes of barbarians,

* *Slaves et Teutons*, p. 7.

drilled like civilised armies, are preparing to march upon Europe under the banner of Holy Russia. It will be a mighty shock for Germany, and she will require all the cohesion and enthusiasm with which the love of the Fatherland can inspire the Germans, to enable them to come out successfully from such a war."

May France be ready when that supreme moment in the history of the world arrives ! Her pacific action, or her place in the conflict, will open up new destinies for her !

CHAPTER X.

Charitable Efforts in Favour of the Wounded and the Prisoners of War—The Geneva Convention—French Committees for the Relief of the Wounded—Sufferings of the Prisoners on their way into Exile—European Committees—Return of the Prisoners.

IN the midst of the frightful disasters and the fatal consequences of the great Franco-German war of 1870-71, there is one redeeming feature which it is pleasing to contemplate—it is the universal charity exercised in favour of its victims. The good work resulting from the International Convention for the neutralisation of the field-hospitals, and the eminent services rendered by the Red Cross Societies, can never be sufficiently applauded. All honour to the generous hearts who devoted themselves to their organisation !

The idea had been frequently put forward, during the various wars which have been waged in our epoch, but nothing had ever come of it, by reason of diplomatic disagreements. M. Henri Dunant, a native of Geneva, had the good fortune to make it a working reality. He had been present at the battle of Solferino, and was so greatly moved by the scenes he had witnessed there that he travelled all over Europe, and had interviews with monarchs, generals, and writers, delivered lectures at institutes and before public meetings, and in every way drew public attention to the sad fate of the victims of warfare.

In 1863, an international conference met at Geneva, attended by delegates from fourteen different countries. It was decided that committees should be formed in all these countries, and that the neutrality of hospitals, ambulances, doctors, wounded soldiers, and those who nursed them, should be guaranteed by solemn treaty. The Swiss Federal Council then invited each State to send a

representative to Geneva, and they met there on the 8th August, 1864, under the presidency of General Dufour, commander-in-chief of the Swiss army.

The treaty was signed on the 22nd August, and ratified between 1864 and 1868 by twenty-two Governments, Turkey included. The United States had sent delegates; but, possibly because they regarded themselves as outside the possible conflicts which might drench Europe in blood, they would not ratify the convention.

The treaty was first put into practice during the short and sharp campaign of 1866. Prussia notified it to Austria, and although the latter committed the great wrong of objecting to it, Prussia acted according to its terms and stipulations. The benefits accruing from the Convention were not slow in revealing themselves, but at the same time it was made manifest that there were many articles in it requiring amplification, or which were difficult to put into practice.

In 1867, many foreign physicians having

been attracted to Paris by the Universal Exhibition, their presence was availed of by the French Association for the Relief of the Wounded to open up a fresh international conference, and a series of resolutions were agreed to, to supplement and complete the provisions of the Geneva Convention. In 1869, again, there was a conference at Berlin, and the army doctors of the various nations nobly agreed among themselves to do all that was possible to lessen the calamities of war, and to effect improvements in the implements for the treatment of the wounded and the arrangements for their transport. Local committees were also organised in a large number of towns, and during the war of 1866 the funds subscribed by charitable individuals in Prussia for the relief of the wounded amounted to £600,000 sterling, without counting the assistance afforded to invalids, widows, and orphans.

The French Association for the Relief of the Wounded, established in 1863, was in anything but a flourishing condition in 1870,

so little were the coming disasters of the country foreseen ! But at the first sound of the cannon an appeal went forth from zealous men, which was repeated by the thousand-voiced Press and echoed and re-echoed from afar. Field-hospitals were rapidly organised, and their history is worthy of being written some day with the greatest of care and the amplest of details. It must suffice at present to say that at Paris, during the first three weeks of the siege, 217 field-hospitals, comprising 3,619 beds, were organised ; the sum of 2,600,000 francs, raised by voluntary contributions, was expended ; 75,000 kilogrammes of linen and 10,000 sheets were distributed. The French Press, too, established an excellent service, and organised model field-hospitals in the Champs Elysées, which rendered the greatest assistance both to the army and to the defenders of the capital ; and subsequently a Catholic committee was formed on the initiative of our Bishops, directed by the Counts Sérurier and De Beaufort, to act side by side with the more powerful

Society for the Relief of the Wounded on Sea and Land. As soon as hostilities commenced, the beneficial influence of these patriotic associations extended itself throughout all our armies.

Very soon, however, alas! our armies were marched off as captives, and distributed amongst the forts and strongholds of Germany. In January 1871 they were located as follows:—

Königsberg . . .	7,510	Province of East Prussia.
Graudenz . . .	3,520	„ „
Pillau . . .	4,300	„ „
Thorn . . .	3,120	„ „
Danzig . . .	4,602	„ „
Posen . . .	13,600	Province of Posen.
Bromberg . . .	2,004	„ „
Stettin . . .	16,000	Province of Pomerania.
Colberg . . .	4,800	„ „
Spandau . . .	6,300	Province of Brandenburg
Custrin . . .	5,442	„ „
Magdeburg . . .	26,000	Duchy of Saxony.
Erfurt . . .	12,066	„ „
Tropau . . .	7,000	„ „
Wittemberg . . .	6,040	„ „
Glogau . . .	12,004	Silesia.
Cosel . . .	7,800	„
Neisse . . .	7,902	„
Glatz . . .	4,600	

380 *FRENCH SOLDIERS IN GERMAN PRISONS.*

Minden	.	.	12,004	Westphalia.
Dortmund	.	.	4,260	"
Iserlohe	.	.	6,002	"
Coblentz	.	.	27,000	Rhine Provinces.
Cologne	.	.	16,324	" "
Wesel	.	.	18,000	" "
Essen	.	.	2,401	" "
Mayence	.	.	27,830	Duchy of Nassau.
Darmstadt	.	.	2,721	" "
Rastadt.	.	.	8,202	Grand Duchy of Baden.

SOUTHERN STATES, KINGDOM OF WURTEMBERG.

Ulm 7,206

As many at Ingolstadt and Augsburg in Bavaria.

STATE PRISONS.

Hohenasperg . . 5,804

At the camp and at
Königstein, near

Dresden . . . 20,000 Kingdom of Saxony.

Hamburg . . . 2,047

Officers. . . . 15,000

Sick and wounded. 10,000

Total French prisoners in Germany . 350,000

Distributed in 200 small depôts . 20,000

Sent in January to the large depôts . 30,000

Total general average 400,000

These unfortunate people, when first made prisoners, were crowded together in the mud, snow, and ice, and had, as a rule, to pass the night in the open air, lying on the wet ground,

and receiving no nourishment. Thousands of men, either taken on the battle-field or brought in by the Uhlans from the woods and country villages, were placed in droves and surrounded by pickets of spike-helmeted soldiers, ready to fire upon them at any moment, and the marching orders were read to them in bad French: "Every straggler will be shot on the spot without mercy."

"Then," remarks M. de Compiègne, who was an eye-witness and a victim, "the lugubrious procession moved on, escorted by dragoons and lancers and Uhlans on their horses, the gay streamers of their lances floating in the wind. The prisoners had to walk, walk, and walk, night and day. In vain did we beg for rest as our limbs failed beneath us. 'Vorwärts!' was the only answer we got. Whenever we arrived at a village, many of us, ready to die of hunger and thirst, would rush in the direction of the well; and then it was a sight to see the officers and soldiers of our escort gallop forward yelling

and cursing. We were driven from the well with the butt-end of the rifle and the flat of the sabre, and the buckets of water which the brave women offered us were brutally overturned. And then the halts became shorter and the marches more rapid. Arrived at the frontier, the soldiers of the line gave us over into the charge of the Landwehr. Not only were the latter recognisable by their shakos ornamented with a large white cross, but still more so by their heavy beards and their unmilitary manners.

“They mocked the French prisoners in their misfortune, and not being able to fight against France, they were glad to have the opportunity of ill-using her children! Never were there such sad processions of men as those which plodded their weary way along the banks of the Moselle and the Rhine! The deserts of the Sahara or of Arabia never saw such wretched caravans of human cattle; and neither the steppes of Russia nor the plains of Berezina ever heard such lamentations or such groans of despair!

“ Broken down by sickness, enfeebled by their wounds, worn out with fatigue, the prisoners advanced slowly towards the place of exile. The night marches were the most terrible of all. Not a single friendly hand to be stretched out towards them—no comrade for the weary one to lean upon and to support his faltering steps! There was nothing left, therefore, for such a one but to sink down when his strength completely failed, to be despatched by a sabre or the butt-end of a rifle the moment he fell. This business of finishing off the poor wretches appeared to be an extremely welcome one to the Landwehr-men, but their officers would sometimes rob them of the satisfaction by either running the prisoners through with their own swords or ordering them to be shot before their eyes. The officers too would often ride at the poor victims at a gallop, and trample them to death under their horses’ feet.

“ Sometimes deep but suppressed murmurings would run through the ranks, and the

curses of despairing men would rise to their lips : ‘ Let us revolt ! Death for death : let’s fall upon them ! Let us go no further ! Cowards ! Brigands ! Butchers ! ’ These were the choice epithets flung at the Prussians ; but they, for the most part, did not understand the purport of the murmurings, or, if they had any notion of their meaning, their only reply was to show the muzzles of their guns and revolvers.”

At last, after a march of five, six, or eight days, or sometimes ten, a German railway station was reached, and the poor fellows were packed like sheep in uncovered waggons and carried off into the interior of Germany. How many perished during these frightful journeys of ill-treatment, wounds, hunger, cold, weakness, and shame ? God alone knows.

When they arrived at their destination they were either penned up in a camp or buried in the casemates of a fortress, and here they were fed upon black bread, partly composed of straw, and a few potatoes, and

of this barely sufficient to keep life in their bodies. A great number succumbed to these hardships, for, almost entirely naked, without linen or boots, lying in damp and unhealthy places, exposed to excessive cold and to the attacks of disgusting vermin, it was almost impossible to exist.

Travellers who have crossed the Central Asian plateau tell us that the penal code of Bokhara is the most horrible in the whole world, and that the two worst punishments inflicted there are the "pit of fleas" and "the well."* Their counterparts were to be found in the dungeons, the camps, and the low casemates in Germany, which were the every-day tortures of our soldiers. There was another, too, dealt out to those guilty of the slightest peccadillo: our men called it the "lattice," and it consisted of planks, with the sharp edges turned upwards, on which they had to lie, tied hand and foot, for days together, and very sparsely fed.

* A third is the tower, fifty yards high, from which victims are flung.

News of the sufferings of our men did not fail eventually to leak out, and France, Europe, the whole world in fact, were moved by their misfortunes. International societies were formed, and meetings were held at Geneva and Brussels to concert measures of relief. From the very commencement of the captivity, public opinion took the matter up energetically ; a relief society was established at once, and two delegates were sent to Berlin to present a memorial to the Minister of War. They met with a favourable reception, and a committee was immediately formed at Berlin to take measures for mitigating the lot of French prisoners in Germany and German prisoners in France. In the meantime, also, the Brussels committee founded an international society to work in conjunction with the Berlin committee.

Committees were also formed in Switzerland—at Basle, Geneva, Berne—and their delegates travelled all through Germany, taking with them abundant relief. Their offices, too, were kept open for communication be-

tween the captives and their friends, and they contributed more than anybody to the alleviation of our men's sufferings.

Committees and sub-committees were further established in all the principal towns of Austria, Hungary, Italy, and Turkey, and whole cargoes of clothing, provisions, wine, and hospital necessities were poured into Germany from all parts. England and Holland, too, were not behindhand in the good work, and afforded valuable relief and protection to our captive soldiers. France, also, on her part, made immense efforts to come to the assistance of her exiled children, and the results achieved by the committees at Lyons, St. Etienne, Bordeaux, Lille, Toulouse, Marseilles, Cette, Rennes, Angers, and of Nancy, Mulhouse, and Strasburg in Alsace and Lorraine, are matters of notoriety.

The first thing to be looked to by our diplomats on signing the disastrous Treaty of Frankfort on May 10th, 1871, was the fate of the prisoners of war. The principal

subject of their preoccupation was the clauses respecting the sending home of the men held captive in Germany at such a critical moment, when France was in the toils of a fratricidal conflict, and writhing in the horrors of civil war. They returned, at last, to snatch the country from the excesses of the Paris Commune, and to obtain, after a few days' efforts, the triumph which the German armies had not been able to secure after an eight months' close investment.



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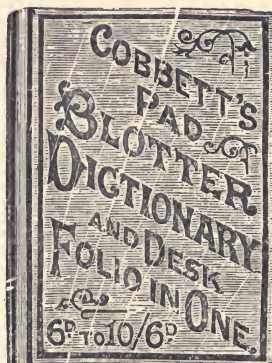
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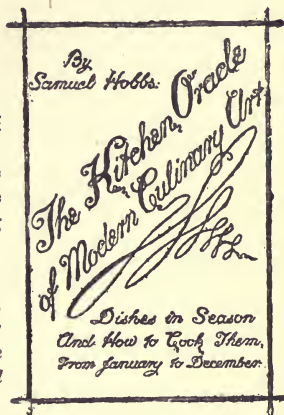
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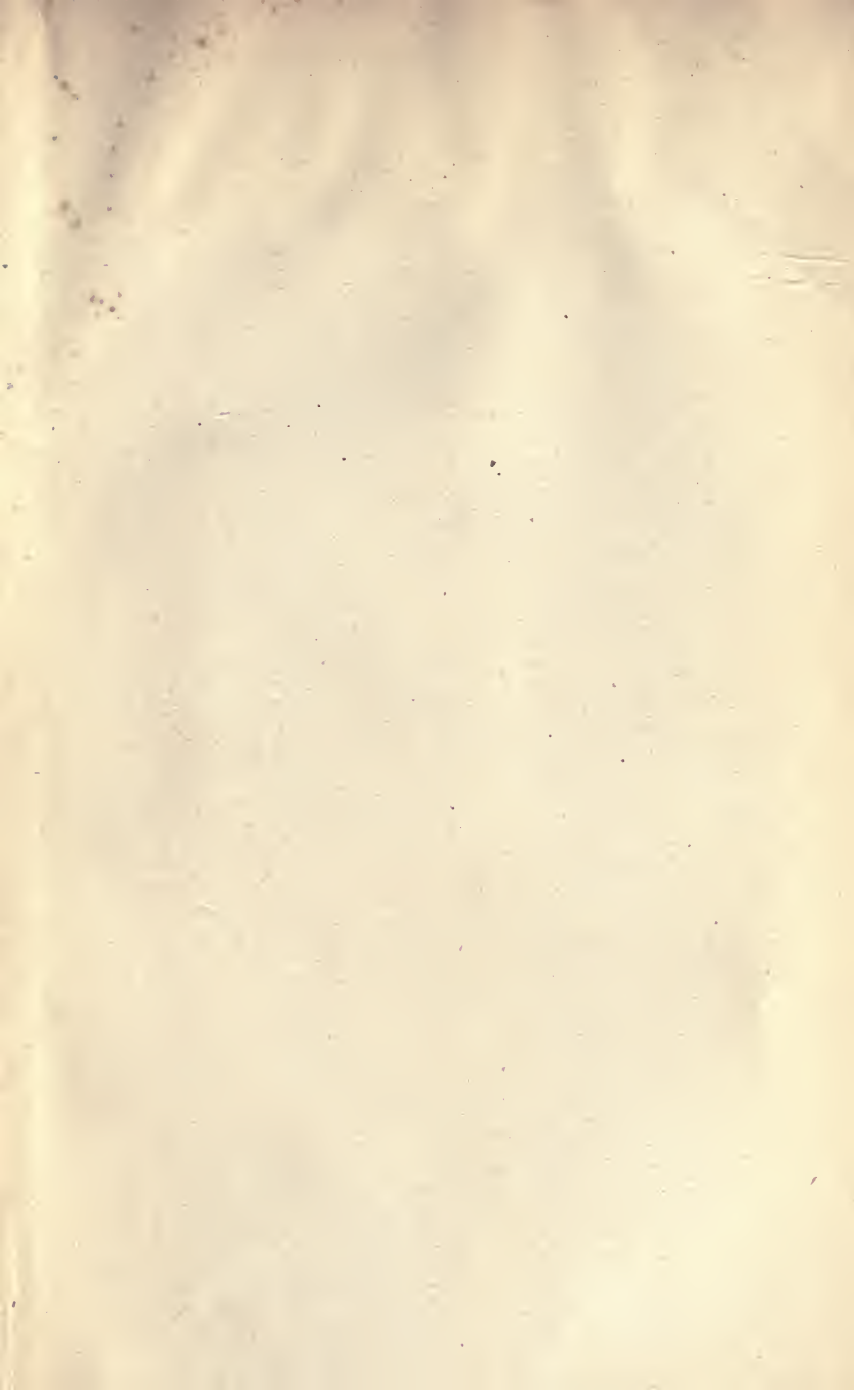
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